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# GUIDELINES FOR GROUP FACILITATORS FOR CORE HEALING FROM TRAUMA

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# *Core Healing from Trauma* Group Facilitators' Guidelines

## Preparing to Facilitate a Group

This facilitators' guide is designed to provide ideas, encouragement, and practical strategies for groups offering individuals an opportunity to work together on healing after all forms of trauma. Although it won't answer every question you'll be asked, the workbook does offer ideas that have been helpful for other group facilitators. You'll probably discover sections of this you can use with your group; other ideas won't be of interest to you—but will be for the group facilitator experiencing questions about that concern. Please feel free to skip sections that you don't need and savor those you do. Your group's healing will be uniquely its own, an inimitable growth process. This is not intended to be a master class in trauma work and is offered with the assumption that you've already either completed basic training in trauma work—or are willing to develop new skills to effectively help people heal from trauma.

Prior to each week's meeting, highlight what you want to discuss and plan how you'll help your group go forward with the week's lesson. Inspire group members to complete each lesson before that week's discussion—but don't be discouraged when it's impossible to even touch on all that's included in a chapter. As you consistently encourage group members to apply what they're learning, take time to enjoy the healing process—expecting God to be original with His plan for each person's life!

A caution: it's easy to get sidetracked when discussing trauma. Try to keep the discussion focused on specific chapter content, remembering that the workbook has been written after years of research and work in the field of trauma. If a group member leads the group away from the workbook discussion into “rabbit trails,” it can easily take the discussion into thoughts that aren't evidence-based or effective for healing. It's your job to keep the group on track, repeatedly focusing on solutions and specific steps for healing.

**Step One:** If possible, invite a few people to be part of a prayer team, people who will pray diligently for you and your *Core Healing* group. Because trauma can derail people's lives and their enjoyment of life itself, prayer is vital. Due to confidentiality concerns, you won't be able to share any details about either group members or their specific concerns, but you can ask the prayer team to pray specific Scripture, asking God to protect group members as they heal from trauma, etc. Prayer is so important that it will be mentioned several times in this section.

**Step Two:** If you haven't completed training in how to work effectively with trauma survivors, now would be a good time to do so. Please read, listen, and learn with critical thinking—in other words, if anything you read disagrees with biblical principles, ask God if it's something you should release or apply. Explaining the need to carefully pay attention to what we're learning, Chuck Swindoll once said something like, “I don't even agree with everything in the books I've written!” Authors hopefully continue growing—to the point that they, like Dr. Swindoll, can disagree with themselves as they gain new insights. Although God says, “I the LORD, do not change” (Malachi 3:6), people—and even therapeutic interventions, can and do change. It can be helpful for us and those with whom we meet to be aware of current progress in trauma treatment.

Two of many available courses for clinicians include: “Evidence-Based Trauma Treatments and Interventions” and “The 10 Competencies of Trauma, PTSD, Grief & Loss,” by Robert Rhoton, PsyD, and Eric Gentry, PhD, available through the International Trauma Training Institute at <http://traumaonline.net/>. online-training.

**Step Three:** Please read books to broaden your understanding of how trauma impacts the human mind, soul, and body. Two excellent books are “The Body Remembers,” by Babette Rothschild, and “The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma,” by Bessel van der Kolk, MD. Because of the complexity of trauma work, *Core Healing* seeks to help individuals move through healing carefully and intentionally. Please keep in mind that each person is different; working with individuals in group necessitates paying careful attention to each person’s needs, body language, and concerns. That is one of many reasons your group will benefit from having a co-facilitator!

## Qualifications of Facilitators

- Before facilitating/leading a *Core Healing* group, all leaders should have gone through the *Core Healing from Trauma* workbook at least once and be confident that they not only understand\* the material but are prepared to help others apply it. [\*Keep in mind that it’s sometimes necessary to read something several times before you understand it!]
- Ideally, all facilitators/leaders need to be at least 18 years old.
- Because the workbook integrates biblical concepts with proven counseling methods, we recommend facilitators be believers in Jesus Christ as described in John 3:16, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8-9, etc., people walking in fellowship with God as described in 1 Corinthians 1:4-10, 1 John 1:7, etc. Please note: *facilitators need to be careful not to impose their personal beliefs on group members, many of whom may not even have an interest in God. However, by being assured of their own beliefs, facilitators can be better prepared to answer questions group members could raise during a week’s discussion.*
- If facilitators are trauma survivors, they need to have completed enough of their own healing work that they won’t be “triggered” when observing group members’ traumatic stressors during group discussions. We want to avoid both transference and counter-transference.
- If facilitators haven’t experienced trauma, they need to have worked with survivors of trauma in either a professional or lay counseling capacity\* to the point that they understand the basics of helping trauma survivors heal. [\*However, if one facilitator is experienced in trauma counseling, he or she can help train the other facilitator, as long as that facilitator has other experience working with groups.]
- Group leaders agree to pray for each group member and to diligently protect the confidentiality of group members’ concerns.
- Before the group begins, each facilitator needs to be familiar with chapter four. *I Am a Victor*, and agree to avoid being a “Rescuer” of group members. Instead of attempting to “Rescue” group members, facilitators are available to “Coach” people in their unique healing journeys, setting appropriate boundaries regarding time, etc.
- Since group work is designed to help each group member heal, it is imperative that group facilitators encourage *each* person to participate in discussion, which includes group leaders being careful not to talk more than group members.
- Group facilitators agree to spend adequate time preparing for each week’s group meeting, which could include answering questions, as well as writing your insights, ideas, and applications in a journal or notebook to bring with you. That way, each time you facilitate a new *Core Healing* group, you can either begin a new notebook or—if needed—you could save time by using your completed notebook.
- Each group member needs to have a copy of *Core Healing from Trauma*. Because this is copyrighted material, it’s not OK for you to make copies of the book or of sections of the book. Encourage

everyone to bring a Bible, notebook or journal, pen, or pencil each time your group meets—or have pens, etc. available for anyone who needs one.

- If possible, offer groups for teenagers [being sure to get a signed release from parents or guardians of minors] that meet separately from groups of older adults. Of course, there are exceptions to this. Just as God offers an original, wonderful plan for each life (see Ephesians 2:10), your group can include multiple ages if you determine those group members will work well and be comfortable together.
- Group members need to be old enough to understand the concepts described in *Core Healing*; for most people, that would be ages 16 and older, but there will be exceptions. It's possible that a parent and adolescent will want to attend a group together. If their communication is healthy; if both agree to group guidelines, and both are aware of the course content, group facilitators can allow them to participate together. This is up to each facilitator's awareness and discernment.
- It is preferable to offer separate men's and women's groups—with men facilitating men's groups and women facilitating women's groups—both to avoid difficult situations and so group members will feel comfortable discussing issues related to their trauma. A vital goal of facilitators is to create a comfortable environment conducive to maximum healing!

## **Eight Stages of Core Healing from Trauma**

You don't need to take time to explain these stages in group, but facilitators do need to know where we're going—and what *Core Healing* is designed to do.

**Stage One** of *Core Healing* is **Stabilization**, which includes coping and cognitive (thinking) training, which you'll find in chapters one and two—*Living After Trauma* and *Don't Believe Everything You Think*. (Even the Overview is designed to promote Stabilization and offer hope for healing.)

Stabilization is vital in order to avoid re-traumatizing group members who might not be ready to either talk about or hear trauma stories at the beginning of their *Core Healing* work. This stage allows participants to develop essential coping skills so they can manage ramifications of past trauma.

“Living After Trauma” prepares participants for the entire course, offering numerous practical tools to manage ramifications of trauma.

Please don't allow group members to begin sharing their trauma stories until they've learned how to manage the stress that's stored in their bodies and minds. [And, even then, it's vital that group discussion focuses more on healing than on past trauma, since group members have chosen to participate in a group that emphasizes *Core Healing*, not “core suffering”!] Please pray that the people in your group will be safe enough to know healing is possible, hopeful enough to know they aren't defined by past trauma, and prepared to move forward in life!

According to Onno van der Hart and Kathy Steele, “directly addressing traumatic memories is not always helpful and can sometimes be damaging to our clients.” When groups allow people to discuss details of their trauma before preparing them to cope with such information, individuals can become overwhelmed, sometimes even retraumatized by the group itself. We can avoid causing such harm when we steadily, purposefully allow the group to focus on healing and moving forward in life.

**Stage Two, Security/Safety**, is covered in chapter three, *Finding Safety*.

**Stage Three, Living as a Victor**, is illustrated in chapter four, *I Am a Victor*, which offers an entirely different perspective of life from that experienced by many who have been wounded.

**Stage Four, Competence**, is considered in chapter five, *When FUD Erodes Competence*.

After having completed the first four stages of *Core Healing*, group members likely will now be prepared to hear brief portions of others' stories. Even so, co-facilitators need to carefully observe group members' body language and be sure people aren't dissociating—that is, emotionally and/or mentally being taken back into their own trauma experiences. If you notice group members “checking out” emotionally, stop the discussion and do grounding exercises, as needed.

**Stage Five, Forgiveness**, includes both chapter six: *Forgive and Forget: Time for a Substitution*, and chapter seven: *Forgive and Go Forward*.

**Stage Six, Identity**, is discussed in chapter eight, *Who Am I?*

**Stage Seven, Purpose**, is chapter nine, *Discovering Purpose*.

**Stage Eight, Belonging**, is chapter ten, *Designed to Belong*.

Chapters Eleven and Twelve offer practical tools to help group members experience continuing growth and encouragement after completing the course. Chapter Eleven, *Posttraumatic Growth: A Heart at Peace*, includes an opportunity for group members to choose to be part of a voluntary research project. Chapter Twelve, *A Mind at Rest*, offers practical opportunities to practice mindfulness, living in the present to experience God's “peace that passes understanding.”

## Stages of Group Development

Five stages of group development have been delineated by Dr. Bruce Tuckman. As a group begins, it's in the stage Dr. Tuckman describes as **Forming**. During Forming, you'll accomplish the basics of working together, such as learning each other's names and beginning to get acquainted. Some group members will be nervous about beginning the *Core Healing* journey; others will be excited. During this initial stage, it's vital for facilitators to set the tone—a strong, loving, hopeful tone—for the group! During *Forming*, do not allow group members to discuss their specific trauma stories (if you don't understand the rationale for this, please review *Stage One of Core Healing* in the previous section, *Eight Stages of Core Healing*).

Be prepared to graciously answer members' questions. For example, if someone says, “I notice there's a lot of Bible verses in this workbook—and I don't believe the Bible,” you could simply note that secular colleges and universities offer courses such as one entitled, “The Bible as Literature.” Verses cited in *Core Healing* could objectively represent historically-respected literature. [That doesn't minimize the importance of God's Word; instead, it offers an opportunity for someone to develop a new, unbiased perspective while reading portions of the Bible—perhaps for the first time.]

The next stage, **Storming**, could be a bit turbulent as everyone gets used to working together. Don't be discouraged during the *Storming* phase! But do *lead* the group! Sometimes people will try to take over leadership at this point, changing the subject, steering the discussion to topics that aren't in the workbook. Because *Core Healing* has been carefully written to avoid topics and triggers that could derail members' progress while steadily, carefully moving forward into healing, it's important for facilitators to keep the group's discussion “on track.”

While prayerfully noticing group members' concerns, the group should readily move into the third stage, **Norming**. This is when group discussions pick up and people begin feeling comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. The group will begin responding to workbook content and to one another during *Norming*.

In the fourth stage, *Performing*, group members build each other up as they interact, helping one another steadily grasp each of *Core Healing's twelve goals*, as their lives are rebuilding, renewing, and being restored, from the inside out.

The fifth and final stage of group development is known as *Adjourning*, during which you'll help group members recognize their progress—and see themselves as prepared to live beyond being victims or even as survivors but as “more than conquerors,” people who thrive in Christ.

This facilitators' guide offers ideas to help your group accomplish all five stages of group development. Every group is different, though, and you'll need to be sensitive to your group's unique needs.

Use the following sample “Core Healing Group Agreement” to create an agreement that adheres to any laws in your state or country. **Note:** Please have all group participants complete and return completed forms to you before the end of the first group session.

### **Core Healing Group Agreement**

*Name of Your Group/Location, etc.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ am participating in a Core Healing group facilitated by \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that any comments made by group members will be confidential and will not be shared with people who are not part of our group.

*If you are a licensed therapist facilitating a group, include your state/country's specific laws in this section, e.g. in Florida:* I understand that if, during the course of treatment, the counselor/facilitator determines that a threat of physical harm (including child or elder abuse) to me or to another person is imminent, by law, the appropriate authorities must be notified, in accordance with the following Florida Statutes: (FS 39.201; FS 39.202; FS 39.204; FS 490.0147; FS 491.0147).

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless my group facilitators \_\_\_\_\_ as well as the sponsoring organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ and/or [your name or name of counseling firm, church, etc.], its agents, volunteers or employees from any claim for damages of any nature arising out of or allegedly due to any counseling, instruction or advice rendered in the *Core Healing from Trauma* group or from any activity related thereto. I accept full responsibility for any decisions I make regarding my life.

*If my group chooses to participate in research:* I further agree to complete the brief Posttraumatic Growth Inventory included at the end of chapter twelve, and I'm aware that I'm free not to participate if I so desire. I understand that my anonymous input will be confidentially used for research purposes only, to help establish *Core Healing from Trauma* as an evidence-based counseling workbook.

**I have read the above information carefully, understand its contents, and agree, under these Conditions, to participate in a Core Healing from Trauma group. I also give my permission for my name and contact information to be given to group members.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(If participant is a minor, signature of parent/guardian is required)

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Finding Timing That Works for Your Group

*Core Healing from Trauma* can be completed in twelve or thirteen group sessions, but some groups prefer to meet for two weeks per chapter, completing the course in 24 to 26 weeks instead of twelve or thirteen weeks. Many groups add an extra week at the end of their group sessions specifically for sharing individual projects—anything from a poem, collage, song, or a craft—something to share with their group specific ways they’ve grown during the journey through *Core Healing*. Other groups include their final projects as part of week twelve. Please allow your group to choose timing to meet its unique needs.

If you’re completing the course in 12 weeks, it’s recommended that your group meet for a minimum of 90 minutes each week. However, two hours is the recommended weekly group session time, due to the amount of discussion material and to provide adequate time for people to bond with one another. If you’re going to take two weeks to discuss each chapter, a 60 to 90-minute group time is OK.

In any case, you won’t likely be able to discuss everything in any given week’s chapter. As you prepare to discuss a chapter, take time to highlight important points—and ask group members to highlight what they want the group to discuss, too. [At the end of each group meeting, take a moment to emphasize how important it is for everyone to get going on the next week’s chapter the day after your group meets. You might tell them something like: “Taking time to prepare each week’s lesson can accelerate healing!”]

Encourage everyone to take time throughout the week to complete chapter one before meeting together to discuss it. Please gently remind them that they’ll get much more out of the course if they take time, at least five days each week, to think about and complete what they can in that week’s chapter.

## General Group Guidelines

**Atmosphere:** if possible, have background music playing as people arrive and until it’s time for the discussion to begin. This is a great job to delegate to someone comfortable with technology. Be sure the music is peaceful, with lyrics reflecting God’s hope and love. Following are just a few ideas—from thousands of options—for background music [obviously, you’ll know your group preferences and can tailor music to meet their needs/wants]:

Audrey Assad, Sparrow Records: *Show Me*

Avalon: *Orphans of God*

Family Church Worship: *Anchor*

Keith & Kristyn Getty: *In Christ Alone*

Natalie Grant: *Held* | *Awaken* | *Mercy Me* | *The Hurt & The Healer*

Michael O’Brien (album titles following song titles): *Yours to Keep* (Conviction) | *Be Still My Soul* (Be Still My Soul) | *Herein is Love* (Be Still My Soul) | *Contentment* (Be Still My Soul) | *I Want to Know you More* (Be Still My Soul)

Rend Collective (album titles following song titles): *More Than Conquerors* (The Art of Celebration) | *Joy* (The Art of Celebration) | *Finally Free* (The Art of Celebration) | *Strength of my Heart* (The Art of Celebration) | *My Light House* (The Art of Celebration)

Selah: *Bless the Broken Road* | *Gentle Healer*

John Michael Talbot (album titles following song titles): *Sofia* (Pathways to Wisdom) | *Investigare* (Pathways to Wisdom) | *Eloquentia* (Pathways to Wisdom) | *Be Not Afraid* (Table of Plenty) | *Holy Darkness* (Table of Plenty) | *Table of Plenty* (Table of Plenty)

Tenth Avenue North: *Healing Begins* | *You Are More* | *Satisfy My Soul* | *It is Well*

**Confidentiality:** Please stress the necessity of confidentiality at your first *Core Healing* group meeting and during subsequent meetings, if indicated. When a person finally feels safe enough to share his or her pain and someone in the group talks about it outside of group, it will result in a horrible sense of betrayal. At the beginning of your first meeting, please have everyone sign a simple agreement, stating they will not talk about group members or anything discussed during the group's time together. [A Sample Agreement is included in the Guidelines after notes explaining the Introduction Week] If you want to send group emails or texts, be sure to ask all members' permission before including them on a group mailing or text list, or before adding their contact information to a list you hand out to the group. Professional therapists: be sure your email is HIPAA compliant. Even so, do not share confidential information in group emails or texts.

**Pace:** As you begin the first session, tell the group it's important to **wait** to talk about their trauma until everyone has attended at least three group sessions, or long enough to develop specific skills to help with trauma management. If people begin sharing their stories too soon, you'll risk causing more trauma than you resolve. Hearing about others' experiences can actually cause survivors to feel like their own trauma is happening all over again. [You'll notice I'm repeating this concern. That is because I have met with many clients who have been re-traumatized in other groups, with leaders who do not understand these concerns. Each of us needs to do everything we can to keep people safe.] If possible, meet for a total of thirteen weeks, using the first week to sign confidentiality agreements, introduce each other, etc. The group can decide if they'd like to add a "celebration session" after completing the course material.

**Co-Facilitators:** *Core Healing from Trauma* groups benefit from having co-facilitators. If your group has four or more people, a co-facilitator is imperative. If at all possible, have the same person co-lead with you each week. You can alternate weeks, with one facilitating the discussion one week while the other carefully observes group members' body language and brings up concerns or questions the lead facilitator might miss. For example, the co-leader might notice one person begin to speak while another person "talks over" that person. When that occurs, the co-leader could wait for the "talk-over" second speaker to finish a sentence or two, then gently interrupt, looking at the person who initially began to speak, stating something like, "I heard [name of person] begin to say something. Then, turning to that person, using her name, say something like, "Please say more..." [The reason for doing this is that many people have great difficulty saying anything in a group context. If someone interrupts them, they might not have courage to try again. The facilitator can help alleviate that concern.]

**Closing group membership:** for your group to function in a productive way, it needs to be "closed" to new members by either the second or third week. Explain what week your group will "close" to the group the first time you meet, then stick to what you announced. If a group continually adds new members, it's impossible for people to feel safe with one another, or to learn how to proactively work together.

**On Time:** encourage all group members to arrive on time and be sure you begin and end on time. You can schedule the group 15 minutes before discussion is scheduled to begin to allow time for people to get a cup of coffee, bottle of water, get acquainted, find their seats, etc.

**Check-in:** begin each week's group by briefly checking in—with the emphasis on **brief:** no more than one minute per person. Ask each person to state how last week's group helped them throughout the week, or ask how they're doing with practicing relaxation exercises, etc. Some weeks will have ideas for check-

in and others will not. (Only use the specific ideas if they seem helpful for your group; because you know your group, you'll know where you need to begin your group time.)

**Be positive:** It's the group facilitators' job to ensure that the group stays positive and on track. If someone criticizes another group member's comments, or talks "over" another person, the facilitator can interrupt and say something like, "For healing to occur, we need to be sure this is a safe place and that our group interaction builds each other." Observe group members' body language. If there is observable tension, pause and do a relaxation or grounding exercise; don't be afraid of healthy conflict. Instead, address conflict in healthy ways.

**Prayer partners:** encourage each group member to have two to three prayer partners throughout the weeks the group meets. If someone doesn't know someone "safe" to ask for prayer, assure him/her that the facilitators will diligently be in prayer.

**Grounding:** Begin each week's discussion with a grounding exercise, as explained in Day Two of Chapter One: Living After Trauma. By the third or fourth week, you could ask group members to bring their own grounding ideas, sharing with the group what they've found helpful to keep themselves grounded between group meetings. If you observe group members becoming agitated, pause to do a grounding exercise during the group discussion.

**Time to share:** When it becomes clear that everyone understands grounding, allow time for participants to openly share, making sure other group members are attentive and responsive to their concerns. Feedback from the group should include comments indicating affirmation and understanding. Please do NOT interrupt discussion when healthy, proactive interaction is occurring.

**"Over-sharing":** At times, a group member might bring up authoritative ideas that take the discussion away from accomplishing what it's designed to do. When someone continually dominates the discussion, gently interrupt with something like, "Thanks for sharing, [name of person]. We need to continue with this week's lesson." Or, "We have so much to cover that we need to move on to the next page [thought, idea, etc.]." You could turn to the person you've interrupted, smiling, and say, "I'd be happy to meet with you one-to-one to hear more about this." If one or two members' domination becomes a repeated concern, you could do the **penny exercise**, giving each group member two pennies at the beginning of group, stating, "We want to be sure everyone gets to participate in our discussion this week. Each time you speak; put one of your pennies at the center of the table [or on the coffee table, etc.]. When you've "spent" both pennies, your part of the discussion is to carefully continue listening while other group members invest their "two cents worth" by participating in our group's discussion.

**Stimulate learning in group discussion:** help group members become at ease, modeling how to deeply interact with one another. Don't stop with one person's comment, question or answer. Ask, "What do the rest of you think? Any other ideas?" encouraging several group members to participate.

**Encourage:** build the group by affirming people's answers and contributions. Never blatantly reject someone's response. If it's clearly out of line, you could gently ask something like, "How did you come to that conclusion?" or graciously turn to the group and ask, "Any other thoughts on this?"

**Summary statements:** use the last ten minutes of your group session to summarize the group's discussion. [If possible, schedule 90 to 120 minutes for each week's Core Healing group session. Because of the amount of material to cover, two hours is the "preferred" meeting length.]

**Homework:** Before ending on time, remind the group when you'll be meeting again and what chapter you'll be discussing. Congratulate them for the great work they're doing! If indicated, remind the group occasionally that they'll get as much out of the time together as they invest in the work throughout the week.

**A reminder:** this leaders' guide offers *ideas* to utilize during group discussion of each chapter of *Core Healing*. You won't have time to implement all of the ideas mentioned, nor will all the suggestions necessarily be what your group needs to accomplish during a given week. Prayerfully ask God to lead the group you're facilitating into His original design—and to the unique discussion that can be a catalyst for growth in the lives of each person present. And, be sure you take time to study *Core Healing* so that you're prepared for people's unique questions and concerns. However, don't be afraid if someone asks a question you can't answer. You could respond with something like, "That's an excellent question. Let me think about it and get back with you." If it's a question that really can't be answered, it's OK to simply state that, without getting defensive. At other times, it could be appropriate to say, "Our work in *Core Healing* will continually offer information and perspective to address these concerns; can we look at this question again later?" [Then, jot down a reminder for yourself so you remember to do so!]

**A Caution:** Although *Core Healing* is designed to help people gain coping skills to heal from trauma, someone could potentially come to your group with such complex mental health issues that they are unable to thrive in a group context. How might that look? An individual could be so depressed or anxious he or she is unable to engage with others. Please don't dismiss that person; instead try to build him or her up by encouraging both homework completion, participating in group discussion, etc. In rare cases, a person's thoughts could be tangential, meaning he or she is unable to focus or participate in group discussion. He or she could seem detached from reality, fly into rages, or be generally disruptive to the group. Please realize this is rare [after leading many groups, I have rarely experienced anyone like this in a small group].

If someone is repeatedly disruptive, you could offer to meet one-to-one or refer the individual for counseling. Because you need to be available to the entire group and able to facilitate group discussion, it's possible you might [rarely] need to ask someone not to continue attending group sessions. Before asking someone to leave your group, please talk to that person privately and try to help facilitate the person's group participation.

Group facilitators should refer individuals to appropriate counseling when indicated. It's often helpful to have a list of professional counselors in your area to provide to participants if needed.

**Let's get started!** What a privilege it is to trust God to bring His loving healing from trauma to people He loves, to bring them life and hope! And how good to know it's not our job but His to do what He alone can do. *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen* (Ephesians 3:20, ESV).

## Overview

[If your group is meeting for only twelve weeks, please include the Overview with Week One]

If desired, you could have each member make a name tent. For this, bring large index cards (e.g. 5 x 8") or card stock of similar size, and have each person's "name tent" folded in half before you meet for group. Provide wide-tip markers and an example of tents, with co-facilitators' names written in large letters. [If you're short on time, you could have members' names on their tents when they arrive.] If you have time, you could ask each person to draw something (or have stickers available for those who are uncomfortable with the idea of trying to draw something) on the card that will help the group get to know one another. Then, have all group members place their cards facing away from them so others can easily see their names. If you can, it's best to be seated around a large table. If a table isn't available where you

meet, your group can be seated in a circle and place the cards on the floor, again so that they are easily visible to others to reduce the tension of trying to remember names.

Allow adequate time for group members to get acquainted and complete paperwork during your first week together. If your group is meeting for 13 weeks, the first week can include a discussion of the Overview, time to get acquainted, and time for each person to fill out and sign a group agreement emphasizing confidentiality. Give group members co-facilitators' contact information.

During your first group meeting, ask group members if they're willing to have their contact information on a list that will be either emailed or handed out to all group members. Usually everyone is comfortable doing this, but check to be sure no one feels *forced* to put his or her names on a group list. [Even in small ways like this, your group can recognize that you value their personal freedom and choice. Someone who has been abused might feel happily surprised to be respectfully asked for permission.]

For all who say "yes" to the list, ask them to put their names, addresses, email address, phone #, etc. on a sign-up sheet which you'll have ready to go before you arrive at group, with columns for name, address, email and phone numbers. You could ask your co-facilitator or another trusted group member to compile the list so it can be given to everyone via email before your next meeting, or—if your group prefers a paper list, that list could be handed out at your next meeting.

Explain that there are five sections in each of the twelve chapters; each section is designed to take 20 to 30 minutes daily to complete. For some, it takes less time than that; for others, it might take longer. And, in some chapters, there are sections that might take longer than thirty minutes. The main point to make here is that each person will get as much or as little out of the workbook as the effort put into it. Even when they don't feel like working on it, just doing the week's chapter can help their healing journey succeed. It might be helpful to say something like, "It can feel hard to face the pain of the past—but please don't allow that belief to stop you from opening your workbook between our times together. The content is designed to help you move out of the pain, not remain trapped in it. And, every page of this workbook is designed to keep you safe and help you go forward in life."

Encourage group members to ask two or three people to pray for them throughout their work in *Core Healing*, and remind them to keep other group members' comments and concerns confidential when sharing prayer requests with their prayer team.

## **Discussion for Chapter One: *Living After Trauma***

If your group is completing the workbook in twelve weeks, allow enough time for group participants to complete/sign the group agreement prior to beginning the first week's discussion. The agreement not only is designed to meet guidelines for professional counselors leading groups but to assure each group member that their comments in group will be kept in strict confidence by everyone there. After completing the paperwork, do a brief grounding exercise. [These are included in each chapter.]

If you're meeting for 13 or more weeks, you could begin the first week by helping members get acquainted and reading the **Overview**, continuing with chapter one next week. Encourage participants to complete **Chapter One** before the meeting when it will be discussed, explaining that, due to time constraints, we won't be able to discuss everything during group. You could have name tents ready to go [see explanation of name tents in Overview section] to save time in Week One.

*The following are only ideas for your discussion; each group will progress through the workbook at its own pace, discussing the questions facilitators believe will be most helpful to their unique group.*

## Day One: **Learning to Manage Trauma**

This day's work is pivotal to the entire course, because it shows how people can manage ramifications of trauma as soon as they occur. Instead of being driven by the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), they can rapidly move into a relaxed state. Be sure everyone in your group understands the process of moving from SNS dominance to the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS).

Take time during group to practice calm, diaphragmatic breathing.

Be sure to discuss the chapter's goal each week—realizing that those who “aim at nothing will surely hit it.”

**Check-in:** ask about everyone's experience preparing for this week's discussion.

**Prayer:** if you and your group are comfortable doing so, you could begin group with prayer.

**Core Healing Goal:** To know how to live “after” trauma, as someone who is fully alive.

**At this point, your group is not yet ready to hear one another's trauma stories!** Carefully, wisely guide the discussion into healing. If someone begins to share a trauma story at this point, say something like, “I hear your pain [sadness, suffering, etc.]. I can meet with you privately to listen to your story, but for now, our group needs to focus on the workbook. Hearing each other's stories at this point could cause more trauma than we've yet prepared to address. OK?” Facilitators: please keep your body language kind, affirming, and gentle if you need to ask someone not to continue sharing his or her story.

**Day Two: Grounding Exercises**—in subsequent weeks, grounding will be included in Day One. This week, it's important to describe *why* we learn and practice grounding exercises to use whenever we experience ramifications of trauma. Grounding empowers us to move into a calm state as rapidly as we moved into a “traumatized” state.

Explain the five Fs (pages 13-15), emphasizing how rapidly an “amygdala hijacking” can move someone out of logical thought and into trauma's ramifications.

Discuss the three forms of grounding cited on page 16 of the workbook and help the group practice each of them. Be sure everyone understands that these need to be practiced *every* day so that they'll be able to “ground” or “anchor” themselves in the present whenever an amygdala hijacking occurs. When someone is being triggered by past trauma, it's not uncommon to need to practice grounding exercises 200 or more times daily.

Ask your group to discuss how the grounding illustrations on pages 14 and 17 help them apply Day Two's ideas to their concerns.

## Day Three: **Building a New Self-Talk Vocabulary**

Hopefully there will be enough time to invite each group member to practice positive self-talk during your discussion of this day's work. [If time is limited, you could have people turn to the person on their right and make a positive statement, affirming each other with a specific comment, such as “I appreciate the way you smile at other group members,” or “your comments are really encouraging”].

## Day Four: **Trauma's Multifaceted Indicators**

If possible, notice [without calling attention to anyone] group members who have many or most of the boxes checked. Pay special attention to the “Caution” box in today's work. If someone indicates having suicidal ideation, you could calmly ask, “What voice do you hear when you think of committing

suicide?” That question usually surprises people, but they eventually respond with something like, “Well, my voice, of course.” It can be helpful to wonder together if it really is the person’s “own” voice at all. Consider John 10:10, “*The thief [Satan] comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I [Jesus] am come that you might have life and have it abundantly.*” Then, ask if the “voice” being heard could be coming from an outside source such as Satan, who wants to destroy the person. It usually is a relief for someone to realize they don’t “have” to keep thinking such thoughts.

However, if someone is truly suicidal, emergency help could be indicated—so be alert, aware, and act if immediate care [such as calling 911] is indicated.

Discuss that people aren’t “alphabet soup.” In other words, encourage people not to be defined by a diagnostic code such as PTSD or PTS. Those codes can be helpful for determining appropriate care to help people move beyond traumatic stress, but they’re not intended to discourage people or make them think they’ll remain stuck in trauma. [This group is not intended to provide DSM-5 diagnoses to group members; any specific diagnosis would occur in individual therapeutic treatment.]

Ask God to show you how to help people begin to understand God’s love and care.

### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

This section is crucial to every week’s work, emphasizing “healing” and moving forward in life. As a facilitator, one of your main goals can be to make sure you’re focusing more on solutions than on problems. While we don’t want to ignore or deny people’s traumatic stressors, we do want to help them move beyond them, growing and changing so they’re able to fully enjoy life

Prayerfully highlight other items from the rest of chapter one that you want to address during your first week. Thank God that He knows each person—and that He will guide you in effective leadership.

[Have everyone leave their name tents behind so you can have them there for your next group session. You could ask each person to bring something—such as a sticker, drawing, or something else—to your next group meeting to add to their name tents to help people get to know them.]

## **Discussion for Chapter Two: Don’t Believe Everything You Think**

If desired, you could play Tenth Avenue North’s “Healing Begins” as your group arrives.

Have name tents ready from the previous week for people to place around the table or room after they arrive. Please don’t set name tents at certain places on the tables [unless your group members have told you they want to sit in the same place every week]. Why? *Core Healing* groups emphasize freedom and choice, so even in seemingly-small things like choosing where to sit, it’s important to leave that choice to each individual. Because we value each person, we create an atmosphere exhibiting that!

Facilitators need to arrive early, to be sure tables/chairs are ready and that the room’s atmosphere is relaxing. Have the week’s grounding exercise ready (organized so that it will only take one to two minutes of your group’s time to do). If you plan to serve water, coffee, etc., make sure it’s ready when group members arrive.

After your group is seated, welcome everyone and begin with prayer.

**Check-in:** allow time for each person to briefly note one specific way replacing cognitive distortions has helped. (Keep everyone on topic.)

**Core Healing Goal:** to identify and replace distorted thoughts.

**Grounding exercise:** 5-4-3-2-1, page 26.

### Day One: **Identifying Recurring Thoughts**

As you prepare to facilitate chapter two, pay attention to your own recurring thoughts and resultant moods. Prayerfully be open to changing the way you think, noticing and replacing your own cognitive distortions. After you've successfully replaced your cognitive distortions with healthy, healing thoughts, you'll be ready to focus on the group's needs and concerns rather than your own!

During group discussion, the focus needs to be helping group members engage in the discussion, with facilitators being careful not to dominate. However, facilitators can and should clarify, guide, help, and illumine, being attentive to the imperative of leading group discussion into new, healing directions each week. [When you have a useful application from your own life experience, it's OK to share it—as long as you're not the one sharing all of the “useful applications.” You want the group to begin to internalize the material and share how it's helping them in their own lives.]

From the list of ten cognitive distortions, discuss what types of distorted thoughts people identified as ones they're *currently* experiencing.

### Day Two: **Replacing Negative Thoughts**

Sometimes people are discouraged when they see how lengthy this section is. Please point out that it provides practical work for this week *and* a reference guide with ideas they can use over and over again throughout life. This section's ideas for alternative thoughts can be especially helpful for the many who are so depressed, discouraged, or anxious that they can't come up with positive thoughts to replace their repeated negative, distorted thought processes.

Be sure to give group members opportunities to share their perspectives about what's helping them.

Pay special attention to the Glance/Gaze illustration on page 31, allowing time to discuss how this technique can help us release fears, worries, struggles, and sadness as we briefly “glance” at needs and problems and rapidly redirect our minds to gaze at God for peace, restoration, hope, etc.

To promote group participation, ask questions that don't have “yes” or “no” answers but that will encourage further response. For example, you could ask one or two people to respond to this question: “What are some specific ways you're applying the Glance/Gaze Principle to current concerns in your life?” “How does using the Glance/Gaze technique help you live beyond trauma?”

### Day Three: **Discovering New Perspectives**

You could introduce Day Three's discussion with the G.K. Chesterton quote from page 36: “Fairy tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.” Our negative thoughts can be debilitating invisible “dragons” in our lives; today's work shows us specifically how to beat those dragons!

It's important to realize that everyone has distorted thoughts sometimes as a direct result of the Fall. And, cognitive distortions are usually so automatic that we don't even recognize their presence. [Dr. Daniel Amen calls them “mind ANTs: Automatic Negative Thoughts.”]

[If anyone says they don't like the children's stories in today's section, affirm their concerns with something like, “All of us will have sections we like more than others. But did you get anything from this day's work? Did it help you understand how to identify cognitive distortions?”]

Ask how group members are applying the concepts in the illustration on page 37.

Today's work is freeing as people begin to see they truly can change how they think! Incredible research has been done in this area, showing that changing one's thoughts can reduce depression, anxiety, etc., in clinically significant ways.

All of us have distorted thoughts at times as a result of the fall. Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV) says "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*" Our goal here is not to make anyone feel discouraged about having cognitive distortions [especially since all of us are susceptible to distorted thinking!] but to offer ideas for finding healthy new thought patterns in God's Word. Emphasize the importance of diligently, repeatedly replacing cognitive distortions throughout life.

#### Day Four: **Journaling to Freedom**

Be sure to allow adequate time to encourage your group members to regularly journal. For those who say they hate to journal, ask if there is some other way they could express healthy thought process, such as art or music. Encourage creativity!

Ask people to share with the group how they applied this exercise—and how replacing distorted thoughts helped them. Remind your group that they can use a separate journal or notebook to apply the three-step process indicated in Day Four. This isn't a once-and-it's-done procedure but a process to continue throughout life.

The SIGECAPS questions included in Day Four are standard psychiatric questions for recognizing the presence of clinical depression. As usual, we aren't trying to diagnose anyone with a major depressive disorder or other emotional concern. However, these questions will help you be aware if/when serious concerns exist. For example, in the "Suicide" section, you and your co-facilitator need to carefully observe if anyone indicates suicidal ideation, especially if that person is having thoughts about *how* he/she would commit suicide. Your job if that occurs is to talk with the person privately and refer the person expressing a specific suicide plan for professional help **immediately!** Someone who has thought of HOW to kill himself or herself could be in serious danger and needs prompt professional care.

#### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

Webster defines "transform" as "to change from one kind to another; to change the character or nature radically." *Imagining transformation* is a crucial part of this and each subsequent chapter. Help your group identify and apply proactive changes they can make in their daily lives. Instead of staying stuck in the past—or suffering in the present—trauma survivors can explore new ways of facing each day's challenges.

As you conclude the discussion of chapter two, be sure to encourage your group to begin working through chapter three—tomorrow, or as soon as possible!

Leaders' FYI: continue being alert for times someone might need to be referred either for a psychiatric evaluation or professional counseling. Although the need to refer isn't a frequent occurrence in *Core Healing* groups, facilitators need to be prepared to refer if needed. For example, survivors of severe trauma can experience eating disorders, self-harm, and/or various addictive behaviors. Several books addressing those and other concerns are listed at the end of the leaders' guide. Unless you are a professional counselor, your job is not to counsel group members facing significant mental health challenges; you can offer encouragement and, if needed, refer them for appropriate help.

If someone is unable to replace racing, distorted, and/or obsessive thoughts; if severe depression is indicated [professional counselors often administer the Beck Depression Inventory for an accurate assessment of clinical depression]; if a group member describes thinking about suicide, be alert for

bipolar spectrum disorders. As stated before, your job is NOT to diagnose anyone in group but to simply be aware if someone's concern is beyond the scope of group work and indicates a need for individual treatment.

Bipolar spectrum disorders are briefly described in Haili's story on pages 71-73 of the workbook, so you probably won't want to take time to discuss these concerns now in group. You need to be aware, though, that people with bipolar can experience moods that fluctuate from depression to mania or hypomania; others experience violent outbursts, hyperactivity, sleeplessness, or bizarre behavior. For anyone with neurochemical disruptions in normal brain functioning, the result could be despair. If someone in your group is currently experiencing numb or out-of-control emotions; mood swings; suicidal ideation; is isolating from others; has manic episodes, or is self-medicating with drugs, alcohol, sex, or other addictive behaviors, this could be a time to refer that person for appropriate medical care. It's important for leaders to be aware that "the lifetime risk of suicide in individuals with bipolar disorder is estimated to be at least 15 times that of the general population. In fact, bipolar disorder may account for one-quarter of all completed suicides" (DSM-5).

*Blue Genes*, by Dr. Paul Meier, offers information about "breaking free from the chemical imbalances that affect your moods, your mind, your life, and your loved ones." Mentioned again in chapter four, *Blue Genes* could be a resource to mention this week, if indicated by group members' stated concerns.

If anyone is experiencing significant mental health concerns, be alert for indicators of the need to refer to a medical professional, such as a psychiatrist, for specific help with traumatic stress and/or other mental or emotional concerns.

There is great hope in knowing that our brains can change throughout life; current research in neuroplasticity underscores that we can live in confidence that "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). However, if someone is missing essential neurochemicals, the struggle is not about a faith failure; it could mean that person's brain's chemicals need to be adjusted, whether through medication, and/or appropriate diet, exercise, healthy thinking, positive relationships, etc. Since we are emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual, it's vital to point people to the importance of wisely attending to each area of life. Encourage group members that it's not embarrassing to find appropriate professional help and proactive "tools" for living the meaningful life Jesus promised in John 10:10.

Why does *Core Healing from Trauma* include diverse diagnostic information such as this week's SIGECAPS? As you become aware of various complex issues faced by your group members, you'll realize how essential it is to stay focused on the workbook throughout group time! Even with everything that has been considered so far, this is only *touching* on various complex mental health concerns that could be present in the lives of trauma survivors. Although our groups aren't designed to treat significant mental health issues, it's important for facilitators to be aware of possible mental health concerns experienced by some people who have experienced traumatic stress. Conditions that are frequently comorbid (co-occurring) include anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, etc.

It's a facilitator's job to gently, calmly, clearly, and wisely keep the group on track. If you allow someone to "take over" the discussion, driving it away from the week's lesson and into their own issues or concerns, you have just allowed each group member to lose potentially important gains. For example, if one person sidetracks a group for just ten minutes—and if your group has 12 people in it—you've just allowed a cumulative "loss" of two hours [that is, 10 minutes for each person in attendance].

It is far better to be KIND than "nice." A "nice" facilitator allows anyone to steer the discussion anywhere he or she wants to go; a "kind" facilitator realizes he or she is responsible to guide *each*

group member into maximum healing, focusing on what will help throughout the workbook discussion. Sometimes it might feel like you're trying to guide a team of wild horses, bent on going anywhere but where you're trying to guide them. Jeremiah 33:3 reminds us all to "*call upon the LORD, and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do now know.*" Ultimately, He—our God Who heals—is our group facilitator. In John 15:5, Jesus explains: "*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.*" Galatians 5:22-23 describes the amazing fruit He can produce in and through you!

Either during this week's discussion or next week, please talk to your group about the possibility of experiencing **intrusive memories**, including nightmares ["intrusive dreams with either specific trauma content or unclear, troubling content"] while working through *Core Healing from Trauma*. Tailor your explanation to your group, including something like this: "One characteristic result of traumatic stress is 'flooding' of repressed memories, sometimes in the form of nightmares, or, without warning, at any time, an experience of 'recalling' or 'feeling' something from your old trauma. Why does this happen? Since approximately 80% of our thinking is in our subconscious, old trauma memories stored there can be metaphorically "awakened" as healing begins. It could be helpful for them to know that nightmares are common when one is beginning to address old trauma concerns. Thoughts that might have been suppressed or repressed for years—or decades—can feel debilitating when they come out of their "hiding places" in various forms. When this happens, it's important to remind your group that they can **manage** those terrifying sensations through grounding exercises instead of going back to old ways of numbing/freezing your emotions.

Even a full-fledged panic attack *physiologically* only lasts two to three minutes **IF** you'll manage any physical sensations you experience as soon as those sensations (such as shortness of breath, chest pains, tingling fingers) begin. A basic breathing exercise can help. Practice this when you're awake so you're ready to implement it as soon as an intrusive thought occurs during the day, or if awakened suddenly, terrified by a nightmare.

Working on healing from trauma could activate old feelings of being in danger, emotions fueled by past or present experiences. To help you live beyond the stress and anxiety present when you awaken from a nightmare, you can take a moment to simply pause, noticing how you're breathing. Are you 'chest breathing'? In other words, are your breathing in short, shallow breaths? If so, imagine that your lungs are two balloons. Got it?

Now, inhale through your nose, allowing the air to "inflate" your lungs, breathing in to a count of three, four, or five seconds, whatever is comfortable for you. Then, pause, holding that air in your lungs for about two seconds before you begin exhaling through your mouth, emptying the air from your lungs, to a count of four, five or six seconds—again, whatever is comfortable for you. To help you remember this technique, you could think "Inhale=Inflate; Exhale=Empty." [Remember to pause: the reason for pausing after both inhalation and exhalation is so you don't hyperventilate.] When you consciously relax your breathing, you'll notice your belly going out as you inhale and receding as you exhale. Breathing with intention can help you live with intention.

Hear Jesus' gentle voice reminding you "*the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I am come that you might have life and have it abundantly*" (John 10:10). The thief [Satan] continually tries to cripple us with lies; Jesus always offers His free gift of abundant life! Together, we're discovering ways for you to enjoy and live in His limitless gifts.

Another idea: have soothing Scriptures marked in your Bible so you can read them during the night. It can be helpful to say Scripture aloud, walking around your room, smiling as you ponder these promises, training yourself to hear them in the loving voice of your Good Shepherd. The Truth sets you free, any time, day or night!

If awakened, you can do grounding exercises, rapidly moving yourself back to the present.

Another option: have worship music ready to play any time a nightmare disturbs your rest.

Whatever you do, don't let concerns about the potential surfacing of old memories deter you from going forward. The problem with fragmented trauma memories is that their presence and influence, whether in our conscious or subconscious, can hinder our enjoyment of life. Keep journaling (per day five, chapter three), replacing distorted thoughts with new healing thoughts so you can experience the wondrous freedom Christ won for you—not only now, but for the rest of your life!”

## Discussion for Chapter Three: Finding Safety

Facilitators' FYI: This week's work helps people move beyond trauma's domination while becoming aware of areas in which current thinking, feeling, and actions are still being dictated by past traumatic experiences. Carefully avoid allowing someone to “hijack” the group with other topics—even good ones. In this work, “good is the enemy of the best,” while the “best” is offering a steady stream of opportunities for group participants to experience safety, security, and stability.

Often people want to bring up current legislation, news events, etc. during group sessions. Please gently, wisely avoid these topics. Why? While we want to do all we can to bring justice to those who have been wounded through abuse, this group doesn't exist for that purpose. There are risks to group members if societal trauma becomes the group's focus, even temporarily. For example, when trauma survivors do seek justice by bringing a rapist, a terrorist, or other criminal to trial—the survivor's healing process can be delayed by months or years. Why might that occur? A perpetrator is quite unlikely to admit the egregious nature of his/her crime; even those who actually admit their guilt often try to foist blame on their victim(s) in court, which becomes complex and confusing for survivors.

In court, a perpetrator's attorney(s) will do everything/anything possible to make the victim look guilty. For example, when a survivor of abuse has to retell his/her story during a deposition and/or face the perpetrator in court, he or she is also re-experiencing the emotional and/or mental horrors of the trauma. That's why we avoid those discussions in *Core Healing* groups. When someone does decide to seek legal repercussions for a violent crime, he or she needs to be in individual counseling to have essential, excellent support throughout what is generally an extremely difficult process. In group, let's do all we can to help people continually focus on how to heal.

**Check-in.** Invite group members to briefly share an experience of being safe/living in security or feeling unsafe/insecure. [Graciously guide each “sharer” to talk only one to two minutes, helping them avoid giving trauma details, since the group completed Stabilization only last week.]

**Core Healing Goal:** To know how to make safety your reality.

**Grounding:** To engage your sense of smell, you could bring each person a cotton ball scented with a drop of lavender or other essential oil. [Prepared ahead of time and placed in snack-sized bags, the cotton balls should maintain their scent for days or even weeks.]

### Day One: Anchoring in Safety

To invite discussion, ask an open-ended question, such as “How are you talking to yourself differently since our group began?” Or, “How is anchoring in the present helping you enjoy your life?”

Ask someone who generally doesn't participate in discussion if he or she would feel comfortable reading Psalm 139:23-24.

Ask how changing self-talk is helping increase their sense of safety (see illustration on page 47).

Because this chapter contains numerous vital concepts, you'll need to be alert to the timing/pacing of this week's discussion. Keep moving it along to ensure that the group gains the essential skills for moving away from being controlled by "tyrants" related to past or present trauma.

### Day Two: **Conquering Fear**

Ask your group if anyone identifies with Seth's initial response to trauma. Pay attention to group members' responses as you consider Seth and Elena's story, especially if anyone present has experienced a terror attack, home invasion, robbery, etc.

Provide opportunities to discuss how people relate to Seth's "invisible box," and discuss practical steps to unpacking our own "invisible boxes."

Discuss how "rebooting your imagination" (page 51-52) via increased faith can increase your sense of safety.

Be sure you allow more time to "park" on healing concepts than painful ones. Everyone is thoroughly familiar with his or her anguish. However, do not dismiss anyone's pain, either. Just be sure you're steadily offering alternatives to ongoing suffering. Day Three can help with that!

### Day Three: **Past or Present Living?**

This day's work is crucial for empowering people to move beyond trauma's control in everyday life.

From page 51, discuss how destabilization can occur, via three nearly simultaneous steps:

1. Past Learning
2. Perceived Threat
3. Sympathetic Dominance

Be sure that everyone understands the wonderful freedom of being able to move from Sympathetic (SNS) Dominance to Parasympathetic (PNS) Dominance (pages 51-53). Allow enough time to process the need for each person to repetitively take charge of the automatic responses of the ANS instead of allowing Past Learning (trauma experiences) to cause current events to feel fearful, threatening, destabilizing, etc.—and note that it might be necessary to consciously move from SNS to PNS dominance hundreds of times a day until it becomes a habit, especially if past learning has repetitively triggered old trauma for years.

At each step of this healing journey, be alert for anyone who could be experiencing old feelings driven by guilt or shame. Even the thought of living in safety can cripple those who feel trapped by past choices such as moral injury that compromised their value system. If someone says something like, "I was an abuser," don't minimize that concern. Instead, go to Psalm 103 or 1 John 1:9 and gently, lovingly point out that they can move beyond even things they wish they hadn't done or chosen.

As time permits, discuss other sections of today's work, such as potential impact of traumatic brain injury (page 54), the rankings on page 55, and other areas you've highlighted during your preparation.

### Day Four: **Choosing to Live in Safety**

Invite the group to discuss new healing choices they're making throughout each day and specific ways their choices are helping them move from attitudes or actions shaped by trauma into the safety and security God provides.

Practice relaxation—either utilizing the exercise of lacing their fingers and stretching (page 55) or the breathing exercise (also on page 55). Encourage group members to notice what happens in their minds and bodies when they consciously relax.

Have someone read the Viktor Frankl quote (page 55); ask if anyone in the group has been increasing the “space” between a stimulus and a response, and how that has transformed reactions into responses.

Throughout this section, emphasize that safety is vital for everyone. Ask if anyone is currently in an unsafe situation. Offer practical ways for that person to experience safety, including making him/her aware of local shelters, safe houses, the toll-free hotline for abuse survivors, etc. Be sure each group member is currently safe!

If any of your group members are abuse survivors, pay special attention to pages 57-59, noting that abuse is an act of power and control—never of love or caring. Help people see how to move out of an abusive “tyrant’s” control.

This is a good time to remind everyone that living in peace is not a process—it’s a gift to experience now and each time Truth is applied to any of our current concerns. It’s not that we’re denying or ignoring the painful past; it’s that we’re literally moving beyond it, into God’s gift of new life in both ordinary and difficult experiences.

### **Day Five: Imagine Transformation**

Take time to discuss the initial questions of Day Five (page 60), “Can you imagine God healing your internal wounds so there’s no longer a need to anesthetize your life? Or is it difficult to see Him as safe, caring and kind?”

Help your group move beyond inaccurate, old thoughts about the nature and character of God so they can hear His real voice—kind, compassionate, caring, loving, etc.

Try to allow time for one or two people to share their response to “Describe the Good Shepherd’s promise to be your refuge” (page 60).

Consider the importance of moving beyond “Why?” to “How?” (page 60). If indicated, wonder about *when* it’s time to change questions.

After reading the Corrie ten Boom quote on page 61, discuss the “Pause and wonder” section.

Ask one or two to describe an experience of choosing to speak kindly to themselves (page 61).

Review Psalm 91:1-6, asking the question on page 62, “What will change in your life today as you rely on God for the security and rest He promises?”

Have one or two people describe specific ways they’re experiencing transformation in their lives.

## **Discussion for Chapter Four: I Am a Victor**

Sometimes, as group facilitators, we can feel as though we haven’t accomplished “enough,” especially if group discussion veers from where we’re attempting to lead it. Or, we can grieve when we observe group members’ intense suffering. Keep in mind one of our main goals is to help people move beyond

their suffering, enjoying God’s provision for *today*—you, too, can keep going forward, remembering to Glance at group members’ concerns and Gaze at the Lord Who can deliver all of us in the midst of suffering [as needed, please review the Glance/Gaze principle on pages 30-31].

What is a healthy focus for us as facilitators? Paul was a leader, too; in 1 Corinthians, he describes what helped him continually move forward:

*For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:2-5, ESV).*

Following Paul’s example, our goal is not to create any sort of dependency on us or our leadership skills—but to consistently, carefully point to the hope and strength available for all group members, each beloved by God.

### **Check-in.**

**Core Healing Goal:** To understand and live as a Creator/Victor instead of as a Victim.

As you discuss this goal with your group, help them realize that this is a lifelong paradigm shift. Each person who transitions out of Victim status is moving into an entirely different way of living. A Creator has choices; a Victim does not. A Creator has authentic hope; a Victim does not; A Creator effects positive change; a Victim does not.

**Grounding:** Your grounding exercise this week could be “taste,” celebrating group members’ birthdays with cupcakes or some other treat, if desired. Be alert for food allergies, providing gluten-free or dairy-free treats for those who need them. [A caution: if you single out certain members’ birthdays to celebrate, you’ll need to continue remembering all members’ birthdays as they occur. That can be a great way to bond, if your group chooses to do this activity. If some birthdays have already occurred, add those people to your group’s celebration. If your group wishes to do so, you could bring birthday cards for everyone to sign for each person the group is celebrating.]

### **Day One: Learning to Lose the Victim Game**

The goal of today’s work is to motivate your group members to LOSE this game! Discuss any points from Day One that you think will help them reach that goal.

Encourage people to talk about how they’re learning to recognize when they’re living as Victims, Rescuers, or Persecutors, carefully looking together at the diagram on page 67. Note how all three roles can continue shifting.

Consider some of the subtle ways the Victim Game can [or already has] become a way of life.

Discuss how accepting personal responsibility can help stop the process of living as a victim.

### **Day Two: Moving out of the Victim Game by Cultivating Mental Health**

*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).* Be sensitive to mental health concerns throughout this chapter’s discussion. Don’t discount or minimize suffering present in people whose lives have been shattered by trauma. Focused on healing, we’re offering tangible ways to experience Psalm 34:18.

As you discuss Haili’s story, be aware that there could be group members present who strongly identify with her despair. Note how she obtained treatment for her bipolar disorder (mental and

emotional needs). When her spiritual needs were also met, she experienced “hope as she began to realize God’s love for her” (page 73). Even though her physical needs were relentless, having her other needs met gave Haili strength for long-term physical concerns.

Shifting from Victim to Creator mode offers choices—but, keep in mind that survivors of severe trauma often don’t believe they have choices. During discussion for this day, wonder together at the gift God gives us in having the ability to choose—even our emotional, mental, and spiritual perspectives of life! Then, kindly, gently, help people differentiate between times they revert (easily, rapidly) into Victim thinking and how they can (decisively, determinedly, repeatedly) move into Creator mode.

Discuss differences between Rescuers and Coaches, helping the group explore the need to look for helpful Coaches instead of enabling Rescuers.

### Day Three: **New Life Choices**

Take time to consider the diagram on page 75, asking if anyone has been helped by becoming aware of these concepts—and/or if anyone is consciously shifting from Victim to Creator thinking and living.

Allow time for group members to share how they compare and contrast the three roles in each game.

Think about and discuss additional differences in roles of the Victim and Choice perspectives.

Discuss ways people are choosing to shift from Victim to Creator, Rescuer to Coach, Persecutor to Challenger. If anyone describes being treated like a “Persecutor” when he or she is not living as a Persecutor, it could be helpful to talk about the importance of loving ourselves—and seeing ourselves as God sees us, not letting someone else’s condemnation govern our lives.

### Day Four: **Living in Peace**

Have a group member read John 16:33.

Ask what they see in John 16:33 that helps them live as Victors rather than Victims (page 77).

Discuss why it’s important to remember that the world is not our ultimate destiny and is insufficient to be our hope.

### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

Ask your group to say aloud again, “I am a Victor!”

Ask what changes, if any, group members have noticed in their thought processes since the beginning of this chapter.

Read James 4:4-15; discuss how realizing that we’re a “vanishing mist” or “vapor” can help us see our problems as less challenging than they sometimes seem.

As a follow-up, you could wonder together about how it helps to realize that our “real lives are hid with Christ in God” (per Colossians 3:1-3).

Before having someone read 1 Peter 1:3-9, ask the rhetorical question, “Is there anything in your life you are powerless to change—any relationships causing pain—any mental, emotional, or physical concerns?” Discuss: What would happen if you, realizing you are a victor, release those struggles to God? He isn’t powerless—and He is able to transform you in His resurrection power!

## Discussion for Chapter Five: When FUD Erodes Competence

As you prepare your room for this week's discussion, please set the mood so people feel welcomed, "embraced" by the atmosphere you set. As usual, it's helpful to have music playing as group members arrive. One suggestion for background music this week is Audrey Assad's "Show Me," which is mentioned on page 84. This song reflects pain many trauma survivors feel—being minimized, marginalized, or dismissed by people who assume that God somehow expects or demands an incessant state of "happiness" from His children. Happiness, however, relies on fickle, fluctuating, undependable "happenings."

In *Core Healing*, instead of relying on elusive "happiness," we're considering JOY, a renewable resource that is a gift from God, the Lover of our souls! Jesus says, "BLESSED [emphasis mine] are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:3, 4). As we continue healing from trauma's impact, it's important to know it's OK to grieve profound challenges and loss, simultaneously knowing we can keep moving forward as whole people, not defined by the presence of physical, mental, emotional, relational, or spiritual pain.

Seasons of grief will eventually end. As Nehemiah 8:10 explains, "...Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Until people are confident that God cares, it will be difficult for them to rely on His strength, or to allow Him to provide comfort for their grief amidst their losses. As facilitators, we can trust God to lead each person beyond "dead places" in their lives and into the hope the Good Shepherd freely gives those who entrust their souls to His good care.

Before beginning to discuss chapter five, please begin group time with prayer.

**Check-in** (a few ideas):

1. Ask everyone to share something from last week's discussion or this or a previous chapter that's helping in daily life.
2. Affirm each person's "check-in" with a word of affirmation, smile, nod, etc.
3. People could pass a brief prayer request to the person seated next to them, using sticky notes or small pieces of paper. If your group has time constraints, these could be written ahead of time.
4. Another idea/option for this week's prayer time: during Day One, you could give everyone a sticky note, asking them to write down three words (from the list of descriptive words at the end of Day One) that, as they begin to apply them, would help them live in new ways. Then, have everyone pass that list to the person seated next to them and pray for that person throughout the week, perhaps even writing down a specific verse to bring his/her prayer partner at the next group session.

**Core Healing Goal:** To develop beliefs that result in godly self-respect and competence.

**Grounding:** try something creative, or use the music idea previously mentioned on page 84 to help group members anchor in the present.

**Day One: FUD's Role in Competence Erosion**

Highlight questions you want to be sure to discuss with your group.

Explain the meaning of FUD: "fear, uncertainty, and doubt."

Remind the group of last week's work in identifying and replacing distorted thought processes. Wonder together how continuing to replace mind ANTs [automatic negative thoughts] can help each person continue moving from FUD into healing.

From page 85, discuss Steps One and Two for moving away from the FUD trifecta.

Highlight the picture on page 87, emphasizing the continuing need to “doubt your doubts.”

### Day Two: **Discovering Truth**

As discussion of day two begins, you could briefly emphasize that *Core Healing* continually offers an opportunity to reclaim God’s original design of life. Applying Psalm 139 can be an important part of that process. God can take a person’s fractured, shattered past—every sorrow, regret, and loss—and put life together again, creating a beautiful new mosaic that displays His love and light. In other words, we are not dismissing anyone’s pain; rather, we’re helping them move beyond it.

From the chart on page 89, ask one or two people to describe what they saw in Psalm 139 regarding “God’s Opinion of Me” and what they wrote in “My Response to God’s Love.”

Ask your group specific ways Carlos and Maria’s story, “FUD—Interrupted”—emphasizes the need to immediately apply the principles of *Core Healing* to traumatic experiences. Ask what else people noticed in Carlos and Maria’s story (pages 89-92).

Note that whether people seek to work immediately on healing from trauma (as did Carlos and Maria) or wait months or years, profound, lasting healing is possible. At any point, life can stop being defined by trauma so you can enjoy living now. Read the paragraph beginning, “Trauma’s influence in your current life...” on page 92.

### Day Three: **Examining Competency from God’s Perspective**

Today, we look at specific ways God rebuilds us in His new design. Continuing to realize that everyone’s life is “broken” in some ways, we can continue the analogy of stained glass (if there is time to do so). For example, in medieval times, stained glass windows were used in cathedrals for beauty and to portray biblical Truth in each window’s narrative. With exquisite craftsmanship, each small piece of colored glass helped convey a message.

Ask someone to read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (pages 92-93), then take time to discuss the questions related to that passage, wondering together how the Holy Spirit provides competence.

Continue emphasizing the idea that we can learn to doubt our doubts instead of doubting God. That concept is extremely freeing to many! When our minds go back to old patterns of fear, uncertainty, or doubt, we can choose not to believe those doubts. Discuss how “doubting our doubts” might look in real-life situations.

Discuss specific ways we can consciously choose to focus on the Truth that sets us free.

To focus on Truth, we can continually learn Truth—spending time daily not only reading the Bible but renewing our minds as we think about God’s character, promises, and the hope He provides in the midst of our challenges and concerns.

### Day Four: **Living in Competence Today**

Take time to consider the illustration on page 95, asking the group how that helps them imagine God as their Good Shepherd. Philip Keller’s book, “A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23,” offers superb ideas to add to this discussion—including the fact that sheep are “composed of about 70 percent water... [and] water determines the vitality, strength, and vigor of the sheep and is essential to its health and general well-being.” The three typical places sheep find water include “dew on the grass...deep wells...or

springs and streams.” The phrase, “He leads me beside quiet waters” (Psalm 23:2b) illustrates the reality that thirsty sheep won’t drink from noisy streams. We, too, can be frightened by the “noisy waters” of this world, so our Shepherd leads us to still waters where we can drink deeply of His living water. Spending time studying God’s Word, we can quiet our souls to experience our Shepherd’s thirst-quenching provision for our needs.

Ask God to show you which Scriptures to emphasize from Day Four; then discuss “imagine what your healing could look like.”

If there is time, ask for volunteers who will share their notes of gratitude to God (page 94).

### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

Make time for one or two people to share new healing insights they’ve gained through journaling that have helped them replace automatic negative thoughts.

If you didn’t have time to clarify the journaling process last week, be sure to make time to do so during this week’s session, explaining that this week’s journaling emphasis is on developing the core area of competence.

Remind the group to invest at least 20 minutes each day for journaling, spending the major portion of that time on “new healing thoughts.” [If group members are having difficulty coming up with healthy thoughts for the journaling process, remind them that chapter two (pages 29-36) offers numerous ideas.] *The reason to spend more time on healing thoughts than automatic negative thoughts is to create new neural pathways to help you go forward in life.*

As you conclude this week’s discussion, take a moment to remind everyone to begin work on chapter six, adding that they might need to do grounding exercises as they read Elizabeth’s story on Day Two.

## **Discussion for Chapter Six: Forgive and Forget: Time for a Substitution!**

People sometimes feel defective when they feel unable to forgive. Gently guide your group through each section of this week, being careful not to allow anyone to derail progress by parking on a personal grievance story—or by venting deep-seated bitterness. Keep offering hope, focusing on healing, even as members discuss their forgiveness challenges.

Be sure to highlight “it is physiologically impossible to entirely remove [forget] trauma memories stored in the human brain and body” (page 100). Intrusive memories, emerging from repressed trauma memories, can surface during a season of stress or during a time of growth, such as while completing work in *Core Healing*. Repressed and suppressed memories could surface while working on forgiveness, because it can be challenging to face past or present pain. Since intrusive trauma memories often occur in “fragments,” those small “pieces” of a memory can seem like puzzle pieces whenever they surface in conscious thoughts. Group members might ask you how to know if these are actual memories—or if they need to somehow force themselves to recall what really happened.

For anyone experiencing “fragments” of memories, it can be helpful to pray Psalm 139:23-24, asking God to reveal anything that actually *needs* to be recalled. Instead of worrying whether a memory is due to something that happened or is only an imagined event, such memories can be yielded to the Lord. If a real trauma memory is surfacing, encourage the one experiencing it to avoid repressing or

suppressing it and instead to briefly “feel” it, for the purpose of then releasing it into God’s perfect care, then continuing to move forward into healing.

### **Check-in.**

**Core Healing Goal:** To replace lies about forgiveness and discover what is true.

**Grounding:** 4-D exercise (page 100).

### **Day One: What Forgiveness Is NOT**

Help the group train themselves to “notice what you are thinking and feeling” and to “ask God to help you as you consider how to forgive—and who to forgive.”

If people start talking about “who,” remind them that there’s important preparatory work to do before we get to forgiving specific people and/or releasing the trauma related to events, circumstances, and other traumatic stressors.

Highlight points you want to cover in day one, such as:

### **Forgiveness is not forgetting *or* Forgiveness is not understanding.**

Urging people to tell *everything* about their trauma story could be as harmful as someone who takes someone to the scene of a car crash and says, “I know you can’t remember what happened here, or why you’ve been in a coma in the ICU for the past month. So, we’ll just stand here in the intersection and wait for you to get hit by a truck again so you can remember.” I know—that sounds ridiculous—and it is! Similarly, it’s cruel and ridiculous to “force” anyone to recall horrific trauma memories, which can be as destabilizing emotionally and mentally, and often, spiritually, as the physical ramifications of a car crash. Though many call it “cathartic” to tell detailed trauma stories, for many others it’s not cathartic at all. This doesn’t mean we don’t talk about specific stories; it does mean we wisely guide people through that process.

For example, if someone is having clear memories of something horrible that happened, it’s important to affirm that person while helping him or her regain stability through grounding, through moving back into the PNS, etc. As a person realizes that old trauma doesn’t have to continue re-traumatizing his or her life, it is amazingly possible to go forward in life.

This week, it’s important that you, dear group facilitators, are prepared to help each person know how to take charge of the body’s stress response. Review chapter one if you need to know how to help group members do this. As your group discusses forgiveness—especially when they review Elizabeth’s numerous trauma experiences (Day Two), it might be necessary to help group members move from the “hot” SNS back to the “cool” PNS. Be prepared with ideas and practical tools you can use!

Discuss some of the words people circled and/or other feelings they added below the list of feelings on page 102. Discuss the importance of *learning to feel so you can heal*.

You could offer an opportunity to discuss, “It’s important to look at the challenges of forgiveness with a sense that something good exists beyond those challenges” (page 102).

Ask group members if they notice where their trauma is stored in their bodies. If possible, take five minutes to do a relaxation breathing exercise to release specific muscle tension, stored trauma, etc.

### **Day Two: One Person’s Forgiveness Journey**

During this day's discussion, both facilitators need to be watching group members' body language, offering stabilization work if anyone appears to be traumatized by Elizabeth's story. [*What to look for: chest breathing, clenched fists, shaking, staring away in a detached manner/dissociating, etc.*]

Take time to discuss this day's questions or bring up emotions any group members experienced while reading Elizabeth's story [ask questions on page 105 and 106].

### Day Three: **Forgiveness Doesn't Necessarily Include Reconciliation**

Emphasize a trauma survivor's right "to be safe from further emotional, physical, spiritual, or mental harm."

Have someone read Philippians 3:10-14, then discuss how to apply the ideas in the paragraph following that passage.

Compare and contrast "Causes of Discouragement" with "To Experience Hope, I Will..." (page 108), asking one or two people to share how they're learning to experience hope.

Because there's a lot to cover in Day Three, ask God what Scripture passages to emphasize, what questions to discuss, etc. [Isn't it wonderful to remember that He knows exactly what each person needs?]

### Day Four: **Forgiveness and Safety**

There is great potential for getting "off-topic" here—especially if someone takes over the discussion with current news or societal injustice. These concerns are rampant—and they are horrible, but keep in mind that we're focusing on healing and hope.

Make sure everyone notes the phone number for reporting suspected abuse [page 110] and understands at what point(s) we have the responsibility to report it.

If there are people in your group who have been wounded by ministry colleagues or by a co-worker who has lied about them or in other ways intentionally sabotaged their work, take time to comfort them, emphasizing Romans 6:14 on page 111. Practicing forgiveness actually helps us experience freedom and release from the wrongs others do or have done against us.

From page 112, discuss: "Many people resist forgiveness because they think it will take the offender 'off the hook'" etc. Discuss Psalm 10:17-18. Consider the illustration on page 113 and the relief each of us can have when we take our offenders "off our hooks."

### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

Today, emphasize important aspects of forgiveness, including:

1. "Forgiving changes a bitter memory into a grateful memory...." (Lewis Smedes). How can we train ourselves to be grateful now?
2. Forgiveness is an act of obedience. Jesus forgave our sins and told us to "forgive those who sin against us" (see Luke 11:2-4). It is a choice we can make before we feel like doing so; the feelings follow the choice to forgive.
3. Forgiveness protects us from carrying around bitterness that easily triggers anger, frustration, irritation, jealousy, or hurt (page 112).
4. Choosing to forgive doesn't necessarily enable us to forget—but it does allow us to "release."

5. Understanding forgiveness helps us realize that reconciliation is not always possible.
6. For anyone struggling to forgive himself or herself—due to profound moral injury, such as that which can follow acts against one’s conscience committed during war, while being trafficked, or due to other regrettable choices—accepting God’s forgiveness brings with it the realization that God can and will release them from the agony of the past. He wants to restore your soul (see Psalm 23).

Celebrate with your group that this week marks the halfway point for their healing journey. This would be a good time to announce the **Final Group Project**, if you wish to do that as part of your group process. Many groups use their final group session as an opportunity for each group member to share a creative project that expresses what they have gained during their work in *Core Healing*. You might have already explained the final project earlier. If so, this is a good time to remind everyone—or to introduce it for the first time. Individual projects can be anything from a drawing, poem, craft project, or a song—anything that helps participants uniquely express individual growth and healing throughout their journey of hope.

Many groups also have a special celebration during their last group meeting. That could be a meal—with everyone bringing a salad or something else; it could be a dessert, etc. Please ask your group what they want to do to celebrate at their last session so they can begin planning that, as well as starting work on their individual final projects.

Next week’s chapter, “**Forgive and Go Forward**,” will continue to build on the important work we’re doing this week. Encourage each person to continue praying Psalm 139:23-24 as they study these important concepts.

## **Preparing to Discuss Chapter Seven**

Please pray for each group member as they complete this week’s potentially-challenging chapter. During the week, you could also send an email to encourage everyone as they grapple with forgiveness. Here is a sample email:

*Today, working on chapter seven, I’m praying for each of you. How is your forgiveness work going? Applying what we’re learning this week is pivotal, a turning point in your healing journey. I’m praying you’ll take time each day to move steadily through the steps of forgiveness and experience profound freedom.*

*We’re in the second half of Core Healing now! Congratulations on all of your hard work.*

### **Important Considerations for Facilitators**

Although not every trauma survivor experiences PTSD, many do. During this aspect of *Core Healing* work, some group members will experience increased ramifications of PTS or PTSD. It’s important that you be aware of how that could look. However, do NOT diagnose. If someone presents with numerous PTSD symptoms, please privately refer that person for appropriate trauma-focused mental health care.

The following indicators are included for your awareness as group facilitators, *not* for group discussion.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM-5] outlines several contributing factors for PTSD, including the following:

“Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways.

1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event (s).
2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others.
3. Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend.
4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic even(s) (e.g. first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse).”

The DSM-5 includes numerous other possible indicators of the presence of PTSD, including:

- “Recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s). In children older than 6 years, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspect of the traumatic event(s) are expressed.
- Recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream can be related to the traumatic event(s). In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content.
- Dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) were recurring.
- Intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s).”

The DSM-5 lists numerous other PTSD indicators, which include but are not limited to: a persistent avoidance of anything associated with the traumatic event(s); negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event(s); negative beliefs or expectations about oneself, others or the world; a persistent negative emotional state; markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities; feelings of detachment or estrangement from others; persistent inability to experience positive emotions; irritable behavior and angry outbursts (with little or no provocation); reckless or self-destructive behavior; hypervigilance; exaggerated startle response; problems with concentration and/or sleep, etc.

If group members describe themselves as experiencing numerous PTSD symptoms, please *privately* encourage them to seek help—from a licensed counselor or psychologist trained in effectively helping trauma survivors heal. [FYI: Current research in neuroscience illustrates numerous ways in which PTSD does *not* need to continue defining a person’s life! Be sure any counseling focuses on living in the present to release the impact of trauma and move forward in life, not on “reliving” past trauma.]

Trauma’s influence can be diminished through cognitive behavioral therapy, solution focused treatment, or another form of therapy such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a highly effective method of trauma treatment. Its founder, Dr. Francine Shapiro, says “EMDR helps trauma survivors reprocess disturbing thoughts and memories, providing profound and stable treatment effects in a short period of time.” Thankfully, for those whose trauma occurred months or years prior to receiving EMDR treatment, extensive improvement and reduction of trauma can be experienced.

## **Discussion for Chapter Seven: Forgive and Go Forward**

**Check-in:** each person could share one helpful aspect of working on forgiveness. If someone indicates that nothing was helpful, help them wonder why that might be the case.

**Core Healing Goal:** To discover authentic forgiveness—and live in hope and freedom.

**Grounding:** One idea for this week’s grounding exercise is to bring a long piece of yarn, string, or ribbon that extends around the entire area where your group is seated. Allow the group a moment to pass the yarn/ribbon to one another, until it forms a circle, with each person holding onto it, “connected” to one another. [Tie the ends together to complete the circle.] Then remind your group of the incredible connection we have in this journey of healing. This exercise incorporates the sense of touch, “grounding” people as they touch the yarn/ribbon and are also “touching” each other. Have a short length of the same type of yarn prepared for each person to take home, to remind everyone of their connection with one another—and so they can “ground,” using their sense of touch to be mindful, rapidly moving back to the present whenever they experience an amygdala hijacking. *Since many trauma survivors hate being touched, this exercise is a gentle way to introduce safe touch.*

Before you transition into week seven’s discussion, remind yourself that your main goal in this week’s discussion is to be sure you get to Day Five: **Writing and Releasing to Imagine Transformation.**

By now, you’ve surely noticed how easy it is *not* to make it through an entire chapter during the fast-paced time your group meets! And that’s OK; hopefully you’re trusting God to be original with His plan—and His guidance—for your group. This week, though, it’s vital to plan to “make it” through Day Five. Everyone who has done this homework has worked hard on this decision to forgive. Making sure there is adequate discussion time is showing them that you respect their hard work.

As you begin, you could remind everyone to review this chapter as often as needed to ensure the material is internalized and applied to their daily lives. There will be additional times when we’ll need to apply forgiveness principles to various new situations, concerns, and people.

### Day One: **Remembering to Forgive**

Begin with prayer, asking God to help each person recall only what needs to be recalled in order to release past trauma---and to entrust anything they can’t recall to God, who loves them and wants to deliver them from evil. Read Psalm 139:23-24, noting the importance of allowing God to guide throughout each aspect of our work of forgiveness.

Briefly ask if they were able to list people to forgive. Be sensitive; for many, this could be the first time they’ve worked on forgiveness.

Remembering page 114 of last week’s Imagine Transformation section, be alert for those who are experiencing trauma because they need to forgive *themselves*. Remind the group that God loves them and wants them to heal!

### Day Two: **Resentment and Grudges OR Constructive Change**

Prayerfully prepare for this day’s important discussion, highlighting anything you see that needs to be discussed.

It is important to emphasize that we’re “freed from the debilitating tyranny of bitterness, hatred, or revenge” (page 120) as we allow God’s love to conform us to His image.

Give group members the opportunity to discuss positive choices they’re making this week so they can continue moving forward in forgiveness.

### Day Three: **How to Forgive**

Ask one or two people to share what they saw in Genesis chapters 37-39 that relates to their concerns. Be sure you've carefully read, considered, and applied the biblical principles in these chapters, as well as those in Genesis 40-46. The story of Joseph provides rich examples of a person who—after being treated unfairly and abused by family members and others—and then was traumatized by an unfair imprisonment—continued to trust God and walk in hope despite his horrific external circumstances. In fact, there is so much in the story of Joseph that we could easily “park” here and miss getting to Day Five. So, keep going. You can always revisit Joseph’s story another time—such as during the discussion of “Who Am I?” in chapter eight, or in Chapter Nine’s “Discovering Purpose,” or even in Chapter Ten, “Designed to Belong.”

In Genesis 50:15-21, Joseph told his brothers, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” If there’s enough time, have group members share examples of how they’re learning to look beyond their suffering and choose new responses instead of being driven by old reactions.

Discuss the question on page 124, “Will you entrust your past and current concerns to God, accepting His gracious provision of new hope, new life, and a new beginning?”

#### **Day Four: A New Perspective**

Discuss “the good news about forgiveness is that you can experience it. You can move forward with clear realization that you’ve released your offender [including whatever ways you were traumatized] from your “hook” and transferred the offense(s) to God’s “hook.” Rather than minimizing the scope and damage inherent in trauma, you have faced it. Now it’s vital to know how to go forward, being released—freed—from past trauma.

From page 125, discuss the essence of shifting focus from “Why?” to “How?”

Consider three steps, or principles, of forgiveness, from Romans 12: 14, 17 and 19:

1. Bless those who persecute you.
2. Don’t repay evil for evil.
3. Leave vengeance to the LORD, resting in His promises to deal with evil.

Ask the group what helps them apply these three principles of forgiveness.

#### **Day Five: Writing and Releasing to Imagine Transformation:**

Ask group members if they were able to write their forgiveness letters, allowing time for anyone who wants to share—either about the process of writing forgiveness letters, taking time to read one of their letters to the group, or describing obstacles they’re facing in completing this chapter’s assignment.

Not everyone will be comfortable reading these letters aloud. Be sure you let people know they don’t “have to” share their letters in group; sharing with the group is simply an opportunity for those who sense it will be a helpful part of their healing process.

In Day Four, page 126 explained that each person’s “choice to forgive can stop the process of being controlled by reactivated trauma memories.” Ask several group members to share what’s helping them manage old emotions generated by trauma memories. [Practical ideas that can help include but aren’t limited to utilizing grounding techniques, praying, listening to soothing music, reading Scripture, working out, journaling, and reviewing this week’s work.]

Ask someone to read Psalm 57:1-3 and Psalm 91:1-4 (see page 131).

From the *Living in Transformation* section on page 131, ask people to describe how they're applying their forgiveness work. For those who haven't yet written forgiveness letters, encourage them to do so as soon as possible, reminding them that the positive emotions resulting from forgiveness will follow the choice to simply forgive, obeying God instead of remaining stuck in suffering.

Before ending with prayer, commend the group for their courage and willingness to go forward in life.

As you affirm everyone's effort, remind them to continue to forgive any time they sense a need to do so, mentioning that there will always be people to forgive and challenging circumstances to "release." Remind them that they can tell themselves, "I distinctly remember forgiving that" any time they recall—and any time they experience an amygdala "hijacking"—regarding people, circumstances, or events that wounded them.

At the end of this week's discussion, you could begin to plan your group party and projects for week 12 (or week 13, depending on the length of time your group decided to meet).

\* \* \*

A day or two after your group meets to discuss week seven, you could send an email similar to the one that follows to encourage everyone's progress in chapter eight. Here is one idea [please don't feel like you need to send *this* message; your own ideas will help you write something to effectively relate with your unique group]:

An essential way to experience daily encouragement and hope is through spending time with the Lord, meditating on (thinking about) His Word, the Bible. It often helps to read a devotional, too, such as the exquisite "My Utmost for His Highest," by Oswald Chambers. Today's "My Utmost" considers "The Vision and The Reality," citing 1 Corinthians 1:2 "...to those who are...called to be saints." THIS is your identity—a saint!

About this, Chambers wrote, "Thank God for being able to see all that you have not yet been. You have had the vision, but you are not yet to the reality of it by any means. It is when we are in the valley, where we prove whether we will be the choice ones, that most of us turn back. We are not quite prepared for the bumps and bruises that must come if we are going to be turned into the shape of the vision. We have seen what we are not, and what God wants us to be, but are we willing to be battered into the shape of the vision to be used by God? The beatings will always come in the most common, everyday ways and through common, everyday people.

There are times when we do know what God's purpose is; whether we will let the vision be turned into actual character depends on us, not on God. If we prefer to relax on the mountaintop and live in the memory of the vision, then we will be of no real use in the ordinary things of which human life is made. We have to learn to live in reliance upon what we saw in the vision, not simply live in ecstatic delight and conscious reflection upon God. This means living the realities of our lives in the light of the vision until the truth of the vision is actually realized in us. Every bit of our training is in that direction. Learn to thank God for making His demands known.

Our little 'I am' always sulks and pouts when God says do. Let your little 'I am' be shriveled up in God's wrath and indignation— 'I AM WHO I AM...has sent me to you' (Exodus 3:14). He must dominate. Isn't it piercing to realize that God not only knows where we live, but also knows the gutters into which we crawl! He will hunt us down as fast as a flash of lightning. No human being knows human beings as God does."

May you richly experience the identity and the LIFE our Good Shepherd designed for YOU!

## Discussion for Chapter Eight: Who Am I?

Facilitator's FYI: by this point in the course, you've probably had at least one group member say, "Grounding doesn't work for me." You can gently disagree with that statement, using it as a teaching opportunity. Grounding does work—but it must be done repeatedly, often literally hundreds of times per day. The body has learned to react to both conscious and unconscious reminders of trauma [activated in a "nanosecond" by any of the five senses]—and grounding requires time and repetition to help the body "unlearn" and move from its stored memories. Grounding, then, isn't "do it once and you're done." Instead, it is consciously training the body to relax *every* time it's reminded of past trauma. When an intrusive memory occurs—whether it impacts the mind, body, or emotions—a person cannot "stay" in the ramifications of that memory if they'll pay attention to their five senses and consciously switch focus, moving from Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) dominance to a relaxed state of Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) dominance [review chapter one, if needed, to understand this concept].

The reason we offer new grounding exercises every week is to provide numerous options for people to choose exercises they prefer. Please remind your group to practice grounding when they *don't* feel the need to do so—when they're feeling calm and happy—so they know how to apply these techniques as soon as their minds, bodies, or emotions re-experience old trauma memories. How can someone know when it's time to "ground"? Noticing the presence of one or more of the 5Fs (Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fornicate, Feed), it's time to practice grounding. It's grounding time whenever one is experiencing "hot" sympathetic system (SNS) dominance. SNS behaviors and emotions might include being aggressive, bossy, defensive, hostile, reactive, impulsive, inattentive, sudden angry outbursts, anxiety, irritability, feeling tense, frustrated "up-tight," etc. Being in one's "hot" system is not an indication of failure; instead, it's an indication that the body is trying to heal. Similarly, intrusive dreams (nightmares) and flashbacks are the mind and body's attempt to heal from trauma.

Since time doesn't heal trauma wounds, it's vital for facilitators to consistently offer hope paired with practical skills so people can confidently know how to move beyond trauma's repercussions, as well as how to respond rather than react to both real and perceived danger. With a mere ten to fifteen seconds of conscious relaxation, it's possible to enjoy living in the body's "cool" PNS. That transition can occur through a simple mental exercise such as math, to physical grounding techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing or intentionally relaxing various muscles, or via soothing grounding [positive self-talk]. It's possible to displace SNS hypervigilance by choosing a PNS state of relaxed attentiveness.

Now, on with the discussion of Chapter Eight!

### Check-in.

Core Healing Goal: To strengthen five areas of identity.

**Grounding:** give each person about 2 Tbs. of black Play-Doh, or a mini-can of Play-Doh, if available. If possible, bring a small picture framed in black and place that in the middle of the table, with only the back of the picture visible. Point to the picture and ask what they see.

Then, turn the picture over, noting that we often only see the “back” of our problems; this chapter’s work is helping us see there is beauty ahead for us as we go forward, releasing past trauma. Have people creatively shape their Play-Doh into something that reminds them of going forward, having their lives framed in new ways, etc.

The five growth areas—spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical—are illustrated on the graph prior to Day One of this chapter.

From page 92, ask if anyone has been “shutting down” in any of the five areas.

### Day One: **Discovering Spiritual Identity**

During this day’s discussion, emphasize how we can find ourselves in God, asking people to read excerpts from this day’s discussion, including one or two of the quotes in Day One and John 14:6.

Take time to discuss group members’ responses to Jesus, Augustine, C.S. Lewis, and Trevor Hudson.

**Be sure to spend adequate time exploring spiritual identity**—because this is where we truly discover who we are!

Take time to consider obstacles people experience in regard to trusting God; page 94 mentions two of them:

1. Difficulty trusting anyone, including God
2. An attitude of stubborn rebellion or passive indifference toward God

Have someone read 1 John 4:10-11, then discuss the Good News, that Jesus is God’s provision for our sins. If anyone in your group has experienced Moral Injury, be sensitive to his or her concerns, offering clarity and practical hope as this discussion continues.

Ask someone to read John 8:1-11 aloud, then discuss the question and “impressions” following that passage, helping the group imagine Jesus’ love for each of them. Discuss how realizing they’re not condemned can help them move forward in life.

During the last section of Day One, discuss why it’s important to be alert for the “voice” they’re hearing when they read or listen to God’s Word. Wonder together about God’s authentic Voice of love and compassion for the afflicted, considering Psalm 72:12-14, and Psalm 37:4.

Prayerfully ask if anyone wants to accept Jesus’ loving payment for his or her sins and begin “moving forward into a new future and new hope,” reviewing John 14:6, John 3:16, if indicated.

### Day Two: **Social Identity**

As you prepare for Day Two, highlight sections you sense will benefit your group.

Explain specific ways we can move beyond trauma.

Discuss how making “new choices every day” can help survivors change their social identity.

Ask about internal labels—and discuss whether group members would “speak to anyone else as unkindly as you talk to yourself,” rapidly moving the discussion forward to positive words or phrases people can speak to themselves. Ask how that can help—or is already helping—them in social situations

Discuss how group members are choosing not to let the past continue dictating how they relate with others.

Ask people to share positive steps they will take or are already taking.

### Day Three: **Emotional Identity**

Ask if anyone noticed old attitudes that they need to let go, or if they've believed the false idea that they have to "feel good" before they can heal. Discuss the impact of false beliefs such as that one.

Consider how adjusting how you think changes how you feel.

Have someone read Ephesians 4:26-27. Ask the group to discuss how they're applying that passage.

Discuss the Continuum of Emotions and how the concepts it introduces can help in daily life and interactions.

As you notice unconscious defense mechanisms as possible obstacles to healing, discuss the necessity of integrating an awareness of that with this course's continual reminders to utilize grounding techniques, helping group members live in the present rather than the past. For those whose bodies are continually up-regulated by old trauma memories into SNS dominance, they're potentially being governed by debilitating defense mechanisms, obstructions to core healing. Group time can help people see that it's possible to move from old, defeating habits to new freedom—into profound healing!

Read John 15:9-12; discuss its application—noting "God has something better for you than anything the world offers."

Realizing that many people stay stuck in trauma because of guilt, pay special attention to the final paragraphs of Day Three, allowing time to explore the total freedom God offers from both false and real guilt.

### Day Four: **Intellectual Identity**

As with each day's work, consider and highlight sections for this week's group discussion.

You could ask someone to read the David Benner quote, allowing time for the group to process how to apply it in their lives.

This day's work cites six Scripture passages, each significant for core healing. Ask God which of the following to emphasize: Luke 18:14, Zephaniah 3:17, Colossians 3:1-4, Philippians 3:7-10a, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, and Jeremiah 17:9-10. Jot down questions you could ask to help the group think about how to apply these passages.

Prayerfully consider which of this day's questions to discuss. If you choose 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, you could mention how that illustrates the impact of an amygdala hijacking—and our responsibility (defining responsibility as "our response to Christ's ability") to take those thoughts captive in Christ's strength, etc.

### Day Five: **From Physical Identity to Transformation**

As you prepare for this day's discussion, pause to wonder what sections of today's work are relevant for your group.

If there's time, look at the Hans Selye quote explaining three major elements of stress and discuss Dr. Selye's statement: "We can often eliminate the stressor ourselves, once we have recognized its nature, or we can adjust the proportion between active defensive attitudes and measure of surrender, in the best interest of maintaining our balance."

From the **Imagine Transformation** section, try to make time to mention Peter Scazzero’s book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, and discuss the four truths he offers to help us as we seek to live “faithful to our true self in Christ.”

Ask group members to share the specific steps they’re taking to reclaim their lives—mind, body, intellect, emotions, and relationships—according to God’s design.

## Discussion for Chapter Nine: Discovering Purpose

Dear Facilitators,

Isn’t it an amazing privilege to contemplate that our lives have meaning and purpose? As you prepare to facilitate the discussion of chapter nine, prayerfully consider what to highlight from each day’s work, allowing time to cover important points, steadily focusing on solutions rather than problems or concerns.

You’ve noticed by now that we don’t emphasize “victimhood” in *Core Healing*, using the term “survivor” instead of “victim” to describe someone who has experienced anything from physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, relational, or sexual trauma.

This chapter’s discussion underscores another clear distinction—people can move far beyond trauma—experiencing purpose in their lives—today and in the future! You can encourage your group to cultivate solution-focused thinking by helping them understand and apply the Bible’s vital lessons about life’s purpose and meaning.

Why does *Core Healing* integrate proven counseling methods with Scripture? We carefully utilize evidence-based therapeutic methods that can help people build new life skills, coping strategies, and healthy thought patterns. God’s Word illumines numerous coping strategies and thought processes while simultaneously offering transformative, soul-quenching hope along with practical new ways to live. God offers authentic life in His Word—and practical counseling can help you know how to apply what the Bible says. If you’ve ever had a massage, your massage therapist likely told you afterwards to “drink lots of water today so that toxins released from your body during your massage will be voided from your body.” Just as water helps the body remove toxins, the Living Water of God’s Word renews our minds with hope while removing “toxins” like distorted thinking or lies. Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

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### On with Week Nine!

**Check-in.** Read Rick Warren’s statement at the beginning of this chapter. Check-in with what each person thinks he means.

**Core Healing Goal:** To understand and apply your life purpose.

**Grounding:** One grounding option is having music to play as group begins, helping people stay in the present via the sense of hearing (for group members who are hearing impaired—or for everyone, since some people are visual rather than auditory learners—you could print out the words of the song, utilizing their sense of sight). [Be sure to observe relevant copyright laws for any music used.]

The workbook mentions Family Church Worship’s song, “Anchor” (available on YouTube, Spotify, etc.), or Michael O’Brien’s “Be Still My Soul.” Discuss the message of the music and how it helps with the quest for purpose.

### Day One: **Finding Focus**

Today’s work includes a discussion of worldview—a philosophical perspective of how one sees the world—and its impact on realizing purpose. If you haven’t considered yet your own worldview, please prayerfully do so before facilitating today’s discussion. It matters; you matter!

Ask the group to describe how Kyle’s story impacted them; discuss the questions following his story.

Invite group members to discuss specific choices they’re making to help them have “a purposeful attitude.”

Consider the statement from *In Pursuit of Purpose* by Myles Monroe: “Your existence is evidence that this generation needs something that your life contains...your personal fulfillment is possible only in so far as you complete your destiny.”

Continuing the discussion of choice, explore Matthew 6:25-34, focusing on how to choose to experience God’s promises when difficult things happen.

How does Viktor Frankl’s statement about suffering illustrate intentional attitude?

### Day Two: **Doing Small Things Instead of Great Things**

Invite those who took time to notice the needs of people around them to discuss their experience.

Talk about how we can give others a “cup of cold water” (per Proverbs 25:25 and Matthew 10:41-42).

Discuss how to apply Viktor Frankl’s three ways to discover meaning in life:

1. By creating a work or doing a deed
2. By experiencing something or encountering someone
3. By the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering

Have someone read 1 Peter 4:1-11 from the workbook or their own preferred Scripture translation.

Invite group members to cite choices they either have made or will make to experience God’s purpose.

### Day Three: **Avoiding Disruptions to a Life of Purpose**

Ask: How does focusing on past or present hurts or injustices hinder us from living in God’s purpose?

Invite one or two people to describe specific ways God is restoring their lives and working in and through them.

The discussion of *How will you entrust your fears and difficulties to God?* can help people know:

1. It’s OK to have fears and difficulties after surviving trauma.
2. Each day’s challenges can be entrusted to the God who loves us and promises to deliver us.

Take time to consider the CHAFF chart, making sure everyone understands how it can be regularly utilized to help identify distractions to a God-focused life, so each of us can consistently live in God’s purpose and provision instead of the world’s fleeting satisfaction.

## Day Four: **You Are More Than a Conqueror!**

Ask God to guide the group into a life-changing discussion of Romans 8:31-39. Take time to be sure people understand how to apply these amazing promises to their lives so they can experience life as “more than a conqueror” throughout each day. We can live in this overwhelming victory, not because we’ve somehow “arrived” but because Jesus’ death and resurrection provided it for us.

This week’s lesson illumines a practical method for studying God’s Word—Observe, Interpret, and Apply.

**Observe** includes finding answers to various questions, including:

- Who is speaking?
- When was it written? What is the historical context?
- Why was it written?
- What do I see?

**Interpret** includes taking time to discover:

- What does it mean?

**Apply** is the most important step, taking time to realize:

- How can I apply what this passage teaches to my life and for my concerns?
- Notice how God provides mercy, grace, strength, peace, and hope to meet your real needs.

Continue the discussion with Ephesians 6:10-18, explaining/discussing each piece of the armor God provides for the battles His children face.

## Day Five: **Your Personal Vision Statement—Imagine Transformation**

There is ample explanation in the workbook for everyone to be able to complete this exercise. If possible, have one or two people share their vision and mission statement. If group members haven’t completed Day Five, give them reasons for continuing on to complete this important work.

## **Discussion for Chapter Ten: Designed to Belong**

Psalm 147:3 promises, “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” What a wonderful opportunity we have again this week, to offer God’s healing balm to souls wounded by all forms of trauma. Although *we* are not able to heal human souls, God is profoundly able to accomplish just that!

Many find comfort and hope for healing when they train themselves to observe God’s power and magnificence in nature, realizing He is the one who “counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. Great is our LORD and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite. The LORD supports the afflicted; He brings down the wicked to the ground.” God actually “delights in those...who hope in his unfailing love” (Psalm 147:4-6, NASU).

It’s important to help your group see that God deeply cares about each of them—as individuals. Only when people realize that He loves them will they want to “sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praises to our God...” (Psalm 147:7). Beginning to grasp that the God of all creation sees them—and wants to heal their wounds—brings hope, not only of belonging to His family, but of living as someone who is fully alive in this moment.

There might be people in your group suffering from severe physical, mental, or emotional injuries that have felt isolating due to being away from those with whom they served in the military, or during extensive hospitalizations, rehab, or even due to challenges such as anxiety or depression [for example, some heart patients experience extreme, unexpected anxiety following heart surgery]. Gently, repeatedly offer hope—without an accompanying sense of “urgency” to heal. Each time you offer hope for healing, emphasize the strength God offers while we’re in life’s “waiting rooms.”

It is likely there will be people in your group who have no caring friends or family, who have no place where they experience a sense of *home*. It is vital you carefully listen to them—and present authentic hope. This chapter offers numerous proactive ideas for building healthy relationships, starting from the inside out. It also offers ideas for how people can learn to reach out to others. For some who have no human connection, it can be helpful to connect with a pet such as a dog or cat. For others, who cannot have pets, even visualizing how it would feel to touch a caring animal can be comforting in times of loneliness—and in everyday life.

**Check-in:** as your group discussion begins, you can check-in with your own original idea, or you could ask, “What did you notice in this week’s work about your innate worth—that God designed you to be loved, respected and valued?”

**Core Healing Goal:** To understand and identify where you belong.

**Grounding:** if desired, you could create an original grounding exercise this week. Some facilitators have brought quilt squares (one unique fabric per person), placing the squares next to each other on a table before everyone arrives. Then, have each group member choose a square as a tangible reminder that we’re connected to one another. Romans 12:5 explains, “so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

### Day One: **When Attachment Wounds Impact Belonging**

This day’s work can be an important step to helping group members develop a secure attachment, first with God, then with others. Highlight important points you want to be sure to discuss. If it fits with your discussion plans, you could ask someone to read the quote from *Discovering the Brain*, on page 172.

Briefly review the four previously-discussed core areas—safety, competence, identity, and purpose, then consider how they could impact this week’s core area, belonging.

Explain basic attachment styles (pages 172-173), emphasizing that we can move away from being defined by “attachment styles” into a new, healthy attachment with the God who loves us so much that He gave His Son, offering new life in His family (see Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, etc. ).

For those who didn’t securely attach to a caregiver during infancy or childhood, it can be exceptionally freeing to realize it’s possible to experience a sense of belonging—appreciating and knowing God as Father—in adulthood. Becoming aware of the depth and breadth of God’s love will take time, intention, and effort.

If old attachment wounds surface as group members consider “belonging,” be prepared to offer true statements about God the Father and the hope and healing He offers, per John 8:36, Jeremiah 31:3b, etc. What might attachment wounds look like in group? It could be someone withdrawing from your group’s discussion, seeming disengaged. It could look like anxiety, anger, or vacillating emotions, sometimes that could include angry outbursts. Your job as a facilitator is to stay grounded (especially

if you, too, have experienced insecure attachment), staying calm and relaxed if/when someone in the group becomes “up-regulated.” If someone moves into his/her SNS, interrupt group discussion and do a grounding exercise, helping everyone return to PNS dominance.

Be alert for fear-based statements or contradictory interaction styles so you can guide the discussion to safety for everyone.

During adulthood, childhood attachment wounds can make people vulnerable to developing PTS or PTSD following incident(s) of traumatic stress or to experiencing detachment and disconnection in their relationships. Although the work in this chapter cannot fully repair those complex wounds, it does offer ideas for establishing new patterns and breaking the cycle trauma began.

Please remember to steadily keep the group “on track” this week, not allowing anyone’s attachment wounds to set the tone for group discussion. Instead, you can repeatedly offer new hope—and opportunities for change and growth!

### Day Two: **Healthy Attachment in a Broken World**

Today’s discussion can help people understand why they feel powerless, vulnerable, fearful, and/or why it’s difficult to trust anyone. As each of us makes “repeated intentional choices throughout each day,” we can allow God’s love to transform our lives and restore our souls to His original design.

If someone in your group (or one of their family members) is an adult child of an addict, take time to read and discuss Claudia Black’s three rules of the addict’s home: *Don’t Talk; Don’t Trust; Don’t Feel*. Consider how that could impact their sense of belonging.

Discuss Allender and Longmans’ statement, “The Evil One wants us to question God.” Think about how becoming bitter, not forgiving, and/or doubting God can hinder growth and healing.

Since there are numerous concepts in today’s work, please ask God to help you know specific sections to highlight in group discussion.

Comfort your group with “Jesus understands the challenges you face,” and “you can experience belonging in God’s unfailing love.”

Ask if anyone wants to share what they wrote in response to Psalm 32.

Conclude today’s discussion with hope from John 16:33.

### Day Three: **Belonging in Church**

For anyone who has been wounded in church—from the trauma of sexual assault to that of feeling rejected, betrayed or marginalized or feeling left out because of attachment wounds—today’s discussion could derail proactive work, especially if the group’s focus shifts from healing to hurts. Be alert for those who have experienced moral injury, since “belonging in church” can feel like an unattainable goal to them. Continually remind the group of each person’s inherent worth (review Psalm 139, Ephesians 2:10, and Psalm 103 for ideas).

Be alert for anyone who has experienced abuse in church, including spiritual abuse—something many say feels like emotional rape. Such pummeling could occur when a church leader verbally condemns someone, minimizing that person’s concerns. Especially when a person feels misunderstood or condemned, he or she is not likely to seek help. Spiritual abuse can also happen due to an intangible power struggle, in which someone desiring a leadership role gossips or lies about someone in a role the other person covets. In whatever form they’re delivered, insensitive words or abusive attitudes at

church—which should be a safe place—can feel more devastating than physical or sexual assault. Those in leadership need to continually develop awareness of how their words and actions come across to others, gaining practical skills to help trauma survivors heal—wisely providing help for those whose souls have been shattered.

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**A caution for facilitators:** because of time constraints, this section isn't for group discussion *unless* you become aware of a group member experiencing these concerns. When someone is falsely accused of any form of abuse—from spiritual to emotional to sexual—anyone who is in leadership in that church, ministry, or business context needs to wisely search for truth. If there isn't clear evidence supporting a person's accusations, provide help and comfort for the person being demeaned, realizing the traumatic impact of having one's life and work unfairly discredited.

Please be aware that people whose thoughts are distorted can even “hear” things that were never said—or cleverly lie about what someone did say! They might even enlist others to come forward with similar untrue tales—things they've actually helped fabricate through subtle suggestions or innuendo. Perhaps one of you, dear facilitators, is in the ranks of the unfairly accused. If so, please don't “own” unfounded attacks on your actions, words, or character. Do ask God to show you if there's *any* truth to what has been said, and confess that, per 1 John 1:9—but if there is nothing to confess, determine to keep moving forward, living in God's love, wisely continuing to share His love with others. If indicated, review chapter four, remembering to live as a Creator instead of tumbling into the Victim role and allowing yourself to be defined (and derailed) by untrue accusations. Review the biblical story of Joseph, taking time to consider that every wrong done to him was ultimately used by God for others' good.

An irony about being wrongfully accused is that the blameless ones who attempt to defend or explain themselves look guilty to their accusers, even when their words are a true, logical, clear representation of what really happened. When people want to believe lies about anyone, they do. Please continue encouraging those who have experienced unfair treatment to fully rely on and obey God, humbly walking in His will and waiting for His perfect timing, allowing Him to provide for emotional, mental, physical, social, and spiritual needs. He says, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9, NASU).

If you sense someone in the group turning people against each another, consider this: “Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them” (Titus 3:10, NIV). As facilitators, we are to speak with kindness, protect the defenseless, and live in God's love. When someone comes to us with gossip, we can stop that destructive interaction with one or two wise words—always, only turning the conversation back to our Lord. On the other hand, when someone is genuinely being abused, follow the protocol introduced in previous chapters, informing proper authorities and ensuring the person's safety.

If people in your group are suffering rejection and persecution for their faith, comfort them with Jesus' words, “Never think I have come to bring peace upon the earth. No, I have not come to bring peace but a sword! For I have come to set a man against his own father, a daughter against her own mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be those who live in his own house. Anyone who puts his love for father or mother above his love for me does not deserve to be mine, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and neither is the man who refuses to take up his cross and follow my way. The man who has found his own life will lose it, but the man who has lost it for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:34-39, Phillips). It helps to know that there will be strife in this world until our Lord's return. We, however, can do all we can to avoid causing strife

by unkind words or behavior. Still, no matter how loving and kind we are, there will be those who misunderstand us—or even question our motives.

One paradox of the Christian life is that there is often a sense of dissonance when we hear, “everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35, NIV), because some—even people we dearly love—will treat us with hate, indifference, or contempt. Being rejected, slandered, or misunderstood can fuel hurt and bitterness—or send us plunging into the depths of God’s love (I recommend the latter choice, for numerous reasons!). For those in your group who have been falsely accused or rejected, encourage them to entrust their lives and their reputations to God.

By now, it’s obvious that living the Christian life by human “willpower” is not merely difficult; it can be impossible! Instead of attempting (in vain) to overcome human difficulties by relying on our own frail strength, we can experience overwhelming hope and victory as we depend on Jesus’ strength and power, per John 15; Romans 8:35-39; Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, etc. Then we can live the life He has called us to live—sharing His love, living in resurrection power.

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Prayerfully consider what aspects of the Wilberforce and *Soul Survivor* sections to include in discussion.

Discuss how to rely on Jesus for safety in a changing world. Wonder aloud about the statement, “Jeremiah addresses the root issue regarding why people hurt each other,” and have someone read Jeremiah 2:13.

Discuss how to apply John 4:10.

Prayerfully support people’s stated concerns with your facial expressions, body language, and a few words, continually keeping the discussion moving forward into healing. Sometimes people feel they are the problem, subsequently allowing themselves to remain in an unhealthy situation. Discuss how people can safeguard their own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

As you process today’s work, encourage the group to notice their emotions to discover what they’re trying to say in order to address real needs they’re possibly illumining. For example, are you feeling depressed because you’re tired or hungry? Do you need to get more sleep and be rested? Are you angry because you’re being maligned at work or school? Is someone experiencing depression due to a need to find relational safety?

This week, focus on helping people build healthy relationships, developing a secure attachment to God and developing and maintaining consistently healthy thought processes rather than stumbling into unhealthy relationships that reflect insecure attachment or a lack of godly self-respect.

Take time to discuss, “Instead of entrusting yourself to flawed guides to help you find a place where you can belong, will you entrust yourself to God?”

#### Day Four: **Getting Healthy**

Consider beginning the process of finding truly safe people by:

1. Choosing to believe you’re just as worthy as anyone else
2. Looking for a place where you can serve others rather than waiting for someone to notice you and/or meet your needs.

Take time to have group members discuss what they checked as their own currently “harmful behaviors or attitudes.”

Discuss why making new choices/improvements in attitudes and actions can be a “wonderful opportunity” to build healthy relationships with others, etc. Invite group members to describe positive attitudes and actions they’re currently exhibiting with people they know; ask them to describe specific ways those attitudes and actions are helping.

Ask one or two people to share insights they’ve gained from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Ask, how did Colossians 3:12-17 help you understand God’s love for you—and how to show His love to others?

Note King David’s prayer in Psalm 142 and how it can be applied to life today.

Consider Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20-26, emphasizing each person’s worth in God’s family.

Facilitators’ FYI: Becoming aware of polyvagal theory, briefly described in chapter twelve, can help trauma survivors understand why it’s sometimes challenging to feel like they belong. Dr. Stephen Porges states that “trauma can turn off the social engagement system. Attempts to engage a person with trauma history...may trigger defensive and aggressive behaviors. From a clinical perspective, traumatized individuals often present features of gaze aversion and flat facial affect.” Basically, Porges’ polyvagal theory shows how the autonomic nervous system (ANS) interconnects with the mind and body, influencing physical reactions, such as digestion and cardiac stimuli, as well as facial expressions.

How might that look in group? When someone is in a state of SNS dominance and attempting to interact with others, he or she might avoid direct eye contact. If you notice someone struggling to look at you or other group members, shifting group focus with soothing music could be helpful. Play music with a positive message, then ask the group to pay attention to the words and discuss how to apply them to their concerns (etc.).

If your group is open to it, you could do a role play exercise, inviting each person to exhibit warm, open body language (e.g. smiling facial features, open hands, leaning forward, etc.).

Help group members feel safe by reminding them that they *are* safe now, offering a variety of tools to ground themselves in the present, helping them move into PNS dominance (utilizing grounding techniques, breathing exercises, etc.).

If there’s time, take a moment to look at a picture of a scene in nature, asking group members to describe their thoughts about the scene.

### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

Allow adequate time to move into a discussion of “positive descriptions to replace past or current negative labels you have accepted about yourself.”

Have someone read the Mike Mason quote about Matthew 22:36-39, then ask the question following it, “Do you love yourself?”

Discuss how to apply Ephesians 1:3-6.

Consider how to be proactive in regard to belonging by seeking to volunteer. Notice what, if anything, group members checked in the list of 26 items before transitioning to a discussion of how Romans 12:4-13 can help reduce feelings of inadequacy as each person realizes his/her God-given gifts for building the body of Christ.

Help expand people’s vision by encouraging them to think about how they can intentionally develop enjoyable family traditions, looking for people they can encourage, rather than waiting for people to

encourage them. One woman, who had no living family members, decided to host a Christmas party for others rather than throwing a “pity party” for herself, alone throughout the holidays. The party was a great success—and she discovered there were others who also had nowhere to go.

It might help if you point out the difference between “hospitality” [helping people feel at home by creating a relaxing environment], and “entertaining” [impressing people with your great food, great decorating, great skills as a host/hostess, etc.]. Instead, focus on creating an environment where people can thrive—a place to belong—and you won’t worry about making everything “perfect” (only God is perfect, anyway, so isn’t it time to give up on perfectionism?).

As people develop new traditions, gratitude can be a great catalyst for change and growth. Please read Chesterton’s quote and ask the question following it.

God has designed us to belong to His family. For additional insights, “Your Identity in Christ,” a free download, is available at the Palm Beach Counseling website: <https://www.pbcounseling.com>, at the Resources link.

## Discussion for Chapter Eleven: Posttraumatic Growth—a Heart at Peace

**Check-in:** Read Proverbs 14:30, then invite group members to comment on this week’s goal.

**Core Healing Goal:** To experience a heart at peace.

**Grounding:** The exercise placing hands together, interlacing fingers and stretching while breathing diaphragmatically can be extremely helpful in times of stress. If anyone in your group has back or shoulder injuries, modify that grounding exercise to avoid exacerbating pain. One alternative is to have everyone interlock/interlace their fingers, and then place their hands on their laps. Point out that they had to be “grounded,” thinking in the PFC, to be able to make that simple movement.

### Day One: **Posttraumatic Growth**

Invite group members to share about their posttraumatic growth in each of the five areas highlighted by Tedeschi and Calhoun:

1. Appreciation of life
2. Relationships with others
3. New possibilities in life
4. Personal strength
5. Spiritual change

If your group has agreed to do so and has signed an agreement to that effect on the group counseling agreement, please take time to complete the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory during session. Make sure they complete the inventory before turning to the factor analysis.

To help increase the effectiveness of *Core Healing from Trauma*, please email your group’s PTGI Factor scores to [corehealingtrauma@gmail.com](mailto:corehealingtrauma@gmail.com). Thank you in advance for your participation!

Viktor Frankl said, “people can transcend suffering by finding meaning in life.” Discuss Adam Larkin’s loss of meaning when he was unemployed and how he recovered his personal sense of Security (Safety) and Identity.

Note that the words “Security” and “Safety” can sometimes be used interchangeably; in Adam’s story, discuss how feeling insecure about his work caused Alan to feel like his identity had been stolen.

Discuss the questions following Adam’s story.

### Day Two: **Experiencing Posttraumatic Growth**

Invite people to describe two ways they observe Jennifer navigating away from childhood attachment wounds to a life of secure attachment.

Jennifer said journaling helps her release her pain to God.

Ask the group how many are regularly journaling. For those who answered, “yes,” ask them to describe one specific way it helps them.

Mention that posttraumatic growth is possible, no matter how difficult someone’s childhood has been!

Take time to listen to how people are “continually [making] choices and [learning] skills to help you build healthy relationships with others.

### Day Three: **A Heart of Peace Can Help You Face Life When It Feels Out of Control**

Anne’s story underscores the agony of an adoptive mother whose family is not at all like what she anticipated it would be. If there are adoptive parents in your group, be sure to ask them how they relate with this story. Take time to carefully listen and encourage as needed.

Look for specific choices/changes that helped Anne when her life felt out of control [hints: she released her profound pain to God; let go of expectations of what family would be; joined an exercise class; practiced Scripture memory and meditation; received counseling and medication for depression].

We began this week’s group time with Proverbs 14:30. As people respond to day three’s work, review Proverbs 14:30 and other verses, such as 1 John 1:9, Zechariah 9:12, Proverbs, and Proverbs 4:23.

Discuss how entrusting our hearts fully to God can help us enjoy this moment.

Ask what specific steps group members are taking to abide in God’s love.

### Day Four: **From Doubt to an Authentic Core**

Anne’s story continues in today’s work. How did her “journey of God revealing and shedding...lies” help her to begin to understand and receive the Good Shepherd’s loving care?

Ask the group to discuss how they identify with Anne’s story.

Discuss the importance of letting go of trying to control others when life seems out of control.

Ask, “Are there people in your life utterly beyond your ability to influence or control?” Discuss how each of us can entrust them—and our concerns about them—to God.

If you have time, listen to the hymn, “He Giveth More Grace.”

Consider George MacDonald’s quote, “The first step toward action is the beginning of the death of doubt.” Review the concept that we can doubt our doubts.

Discuss **one action step** chosen by various group members to trust God to provide strength, grace, mercy, peace, and power for their specific needs.

In the final section of Day Four, consider what helped Sandy experience a heart of peace.

## Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

Take time to talk about the neurological and physiological ramifications of posttraumatic growth.

Consider how each person can make choices that allow their lives to flourish.

From comments by Mia Michaels, compare life to a beautiful dance. What can each of us do to skillfully create a unique life “dance”—realizing our lives are works of art (per Ephesians 2:10)?

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk explained the significance of being intentionally physically active. When specific health concerns are present, people should check with their physicians for recommendations of appropriate physical exercise. For many, swimming is an alternative, a non-weight bearing activity that can be enjoyable when other physical activities are impossible.

For those with physical limitations that prevent all forms of physical exercise, art is a substitute that can offer healing and growth—helping people get “outside” of themselves to experience beauty. [If someone protests, “I can’t draw,” you could mention online possibilities for learning basic art techniques. Other forms of art include creating crafts, learning to sew, knitting, crocheting, etc. A transformational bonus of any of these activities is getting involved with *others* to do them—and/or giving the results of your creativity to those who can benefit from them—like making mini-quilts or stuffed animals and taking them to children who are hospitalized.]

Take time to listen to group members’ responses to: “Describe one or two activities you can begin doing this week to help activate not only your heart but your entire body.”

Highlight the necessity to choose to live in this moment as “boss” of your own body.

## **Discussion for Chapter Twelve: A Mind at Rest**

Commend group members’ progress—and remind them of God’s provision and hope for the future! Encourage them to continually expect God to accomplish transformative work in their lives.

### **Check-in.**

**Core Healing Goal:** To be at rest, enjoying life in this moment.

**Grounding:** ask several volunteers to share their favorite grounding exercises and do one or two of those together as you begin. Or, do the “soothing grounding” mentioned in the chapter, perhaps having each person turn to the person on his/her right and say a positive statement about that person.

### **Day One: From Racing to Restful Thoughts**

Discuss factors that can influence how we think.

Did anything in the author’s story provide comfort to help you face your own losses and sorrows?

Consider how to apply Romans 5:3-5 to your unique concerns.

Read The Serenity Prayer (unabridged) and consider how trusting God to make all things right can help you accept things that can’t be changed.

Consider the Watson quote and how applying it can be eminently practical.

### **Day Two: Finding Rest When You’re Not at “Home”**

Considering the significance of praying for and caring for others' needs, read and ponder (as time permits) Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 13:3, and 1 Peter 2:11-12.

What does it mean to say that no one is truly "at home" on earth?

Faith describes instability and complex trauma she experienced during childhood in South America, trauma that continued years after her immigration to the United States. She said her "sense of self and the ability to trust people" were destroyed during childhood. How did believing Jesus' words in John 16:33 help her move beyond her suffering?

Ask group members to describe a situation, difficulty, struggle, or concern they could yield to God today.

After considering Wei's story, talk about specific struggles immigrants can experience.

Read Isaiah 26:3-4. Discuss how we can experience God's perfect peace now.

Ask the group if any of them will share their prayers, written in response to Isaiah 26:3-4.

### Day Three: **From Lies to Love**

In what ways do we all need to begin speaking to one another in truth rather than Christian clichés or culturally-derived lies?

How can we listen to each other without judgment or condemnation?

Compare and contrast the often-misunderstood meaning—and application of— 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

How can we allow God to make His strength "perfect" in our weakness?

### Day Four: **A Mind at Rest When Suffering Is Nonstop**

Jo Bryant explained several things that have helped throughout a season of nonstop suffering she and her husband Steven are experiencing. Describe and illustrate how Jo and Steven experience relief amidst profound suffering.

What are three ideas from *Core Healing* that have helped you?

In what ways are you applying *Core Healing* to your concerns?

### Day Five: **Imagine Transformation**

This day's work summarizes much of the work we've done, reminding us to live in the present rather than the past and mulling over ideas for change and growth (such as getting involved in a group like Celebrate Recovery if suffering from addictions).

I hesitated to mention the Adverse Childhood Experience Scale in chapter twelve, but I did so because it's considered standard protocol for working with trauma survivors. It's important to know that a person's ACE score is only intended to be used as information and as a catalyst to continuing forward in the process of steady growth. A high ACE score doesn't indicate that someone can't function or is doomed to a lifetime of emotional or mental struggles. Keep in mind that people are resilient—and that the brain has amazing neuroplasticity! Trauma informed treatment (such as *Core Healing from Trauma*), mindfulness (continually choosing to live in this moment), art, journaling, and building healthy relationships, can all be helpful in building resilience and coping skills. For anyone concerned about an ACE score, facilitators can offer reassurance and hope.

By this point in the course, although it's unlikely someone will be having suicidal ideation, it is possible, since trauma stored in the amygdala can still hijack logical thought. Follow guidelines in Day Five, referring for emergency help, if indicated. Focus on helping people realize they don't have to live in the negative thought patterns driven by traumatic stress. It's especially important to help them talk back to negative thoughts, recognizing that not every "voice" they hear is worth listening to.

As your group members end this phase of their unique healing journeys, discuss Isaiah 41:10 and Psalm 27:1, giving each person an opportunity to briefly discuss how applying these passages in everyday life will help them continue going forward.

Encourage the group to continue reviewing and applying *Core Healing* in daily life. It could be helpful to look at the "Glance/Gaze Girl" on page 31, noting that we'll all continue have challenges (per John 16:33). Give each person an opportunity to discuss a specific way we've learned to live beyond those challenges, in God's grace, strength and hope!

Close with a reminder to Imagine Transformation!

If your group is sharing final projects today, enjoy each other's work! I'm rejoicing with you.

God bless you, dear friends.

In His Unfailing Love,

Marti

## **Books to Consider for Your Library**

Since many complex concerns can result from traumatic stress, following are a few of the many available books that can be helpful for individuals as their healing journey continues.

### **Teaching Children Personal Safety**

*My Body Is Special and Belongs to Me* by Sally Berenzweig, Med, MA and Cherie Benjoseph, LCSW, KidSafe Foundation

*I Said NO! A kid-to-kid guide to keeping private parts private* by Zack and Kimberly King, Boulden Publishing

*My Body Is Private* by Linda Walvoord Girard

### **Bibliotherapeutic Novels to help people heal from abuse, abortion, trauma, and neglect**

*Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers, Multnomah

*Secrets Behind the Door* by Marti Wibbels, Xulon

*Sound of Light* by Marti Wibbels, Loring Gate Productions

*Tilly*, by Frank E. Peretti, Crossway Books

### **Workbooks for Healing from Trauma**

*Core Healing: A Journey of Hope* [formerly known as *Core Healing from Sexual Abuse: A Journey of Hope*] by Marti Wibbels, Loring Gate Productions, order at the *Resources* link at [www.pbcounseling.com](http://www.pbcounseling.com)

*Sandidad del Nucleo Del Abuso Sexual: Un Viaje de Esperanza* by Marti Wibbels, traducido por Rosauara Zeghir, Loring Gate Productions, order at *Resources* at [www.pbcounseling.com](http://www.pbcounseling.com)

*The Wounded Heart* [available as a book and workbook], by Dan Allender, NavPress

*Seeking Safety: A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse* by Lisa M. Najavits, The Guilford Press

*Surrendering the Secret: Healing the Heartbreak of Abortion* [available as a workbook, leaders' guide and DVD series] by Pat Layton, LifeWay

### **Reclaiming God's Design**

*The DNA of Relationships: Discover How You Are Designed for Satisfying Relationships*, by Dr. Gary Smalley, Tyndale House Publishers

*The Sacred Search*, by Gary Thomas, David C. Cook

*Sacred Marriage*, by Gary Thomas, Zondervan

*A Celebration of Sex: A Christian Couple's Manual [A guide to enjoying god's gift of married sexual pleasure]*, by Dr. Douglas E. Rosenau, Thomas Nelson Publishers

*Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage* by Ed Wheat, M.D. and Gaye Wheat, Revell

## **Eating Disorders**

*Hope, Help and Healing for Eating Disorders: A Whole-Person Approach to Treatment of Anorexia, Bulimia, and Disordered Eating*, by Gregory L. Jantz, PhD with Ann McMurray, WaterBrook Press

### **When Emotional and/or Spiritual Pain Are Expressed in Self-Harm**

*Inside a Cutter's Mind* by Jerusha Clark with Dr. Earl Henslin, NavPress

### **Help and Prevention for Addictive Behaviors**

*Addictions A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* by Edward T. Welch, CCEF, PR Publishing

*No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Addiction* by Marnie C. Ferree, IVP Books

*Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex Is Affecting Our Children* by Joe S. Mcilhaney, Jr., MD and Freda McKissic Bush, MD, Northfield Publishing

*Clean: A Proven Plan for Men Committed to Sexual Integrity* by Douglas Weiss, PhD

*When Your Husband Is Addicted to Pornography* by Vickie Tiede, New Growth Press

For a complete list of references used for this guide and/or in *Core Healing from Trauma*, please see the References section in the *Core Healing from Trauma* workbook.